

Superman

Post-

CRISIS

Belonging

SUPERMAN

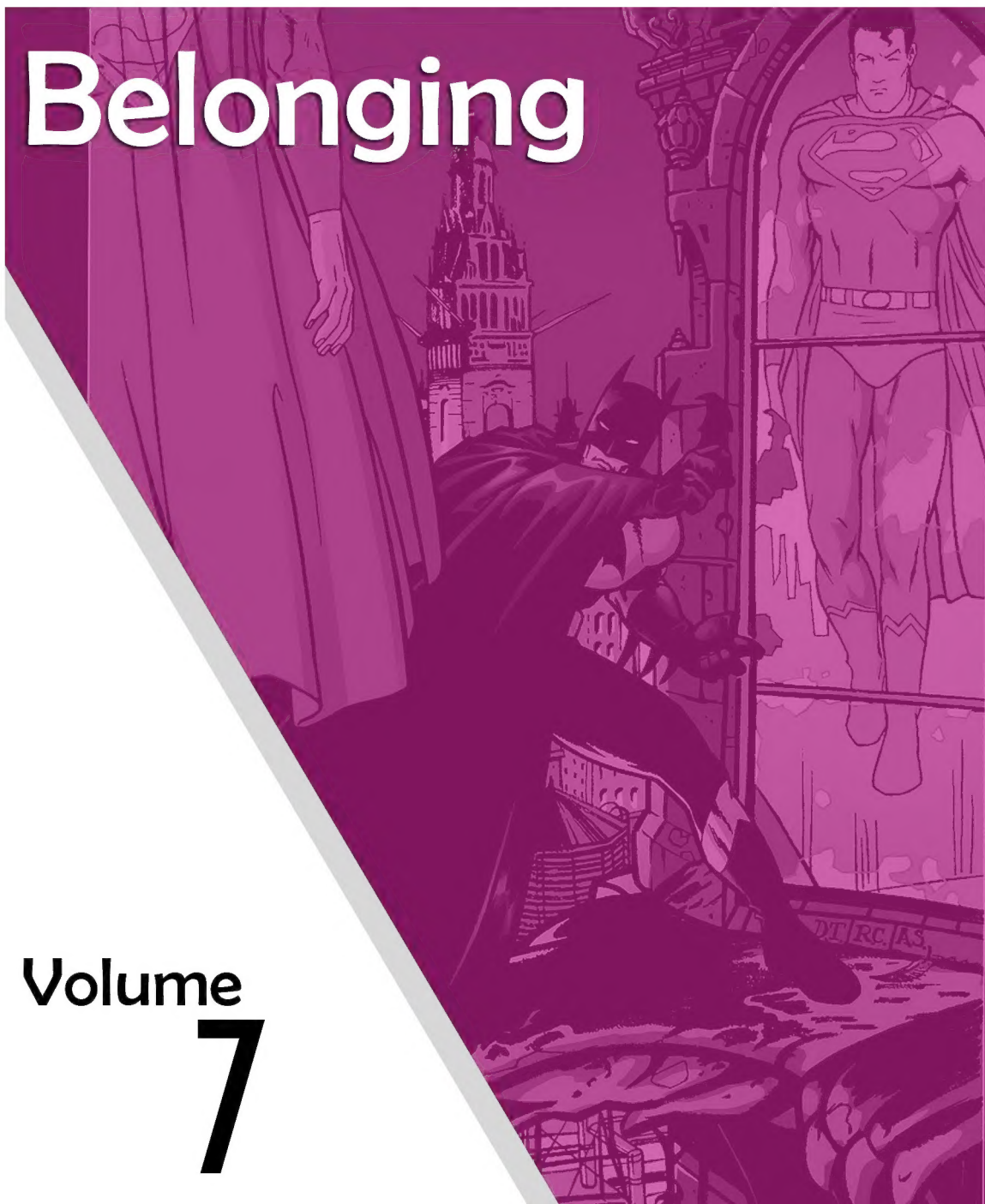
Post-

CRISIS
ON INFINITE EARTHS

Belonging

Volume

7

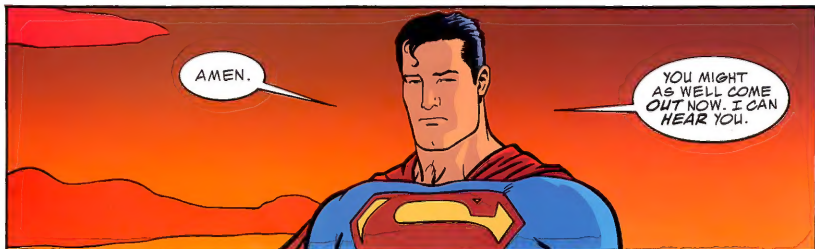
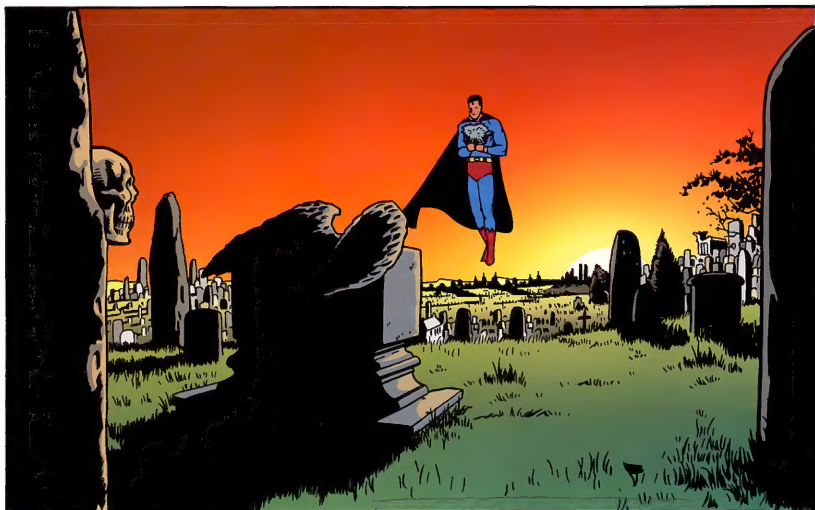


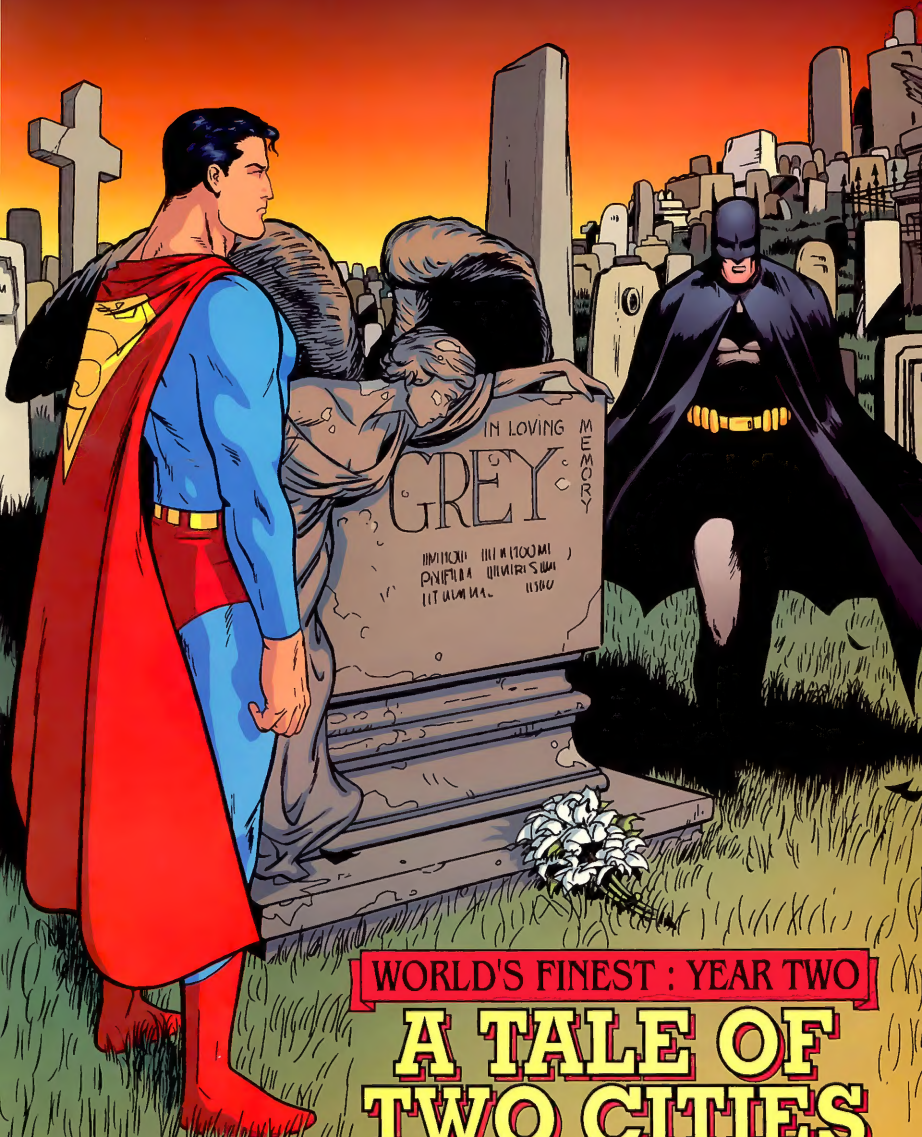
NINE YEARS AGO.

NEW YORK CITY'S
FOREST PARK
CEMETERY.

TWILIGHT.







WORLD'S FINEST : YEAR TWO

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

KARL KESEL	DAVE TAYLOR	ROBERT CAMPANELLA	ALEX SINCLAIR	BILL OAKLEY	JOSEPH ILLIDGE	DARREN VINCENZO
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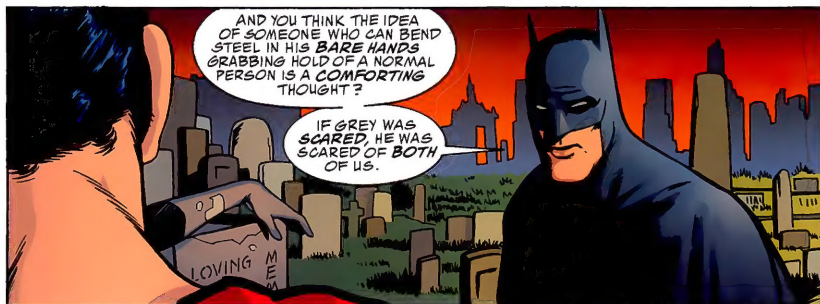
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MY GOD...



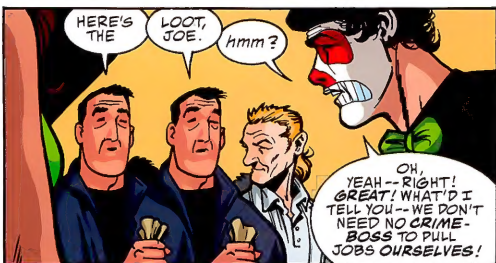
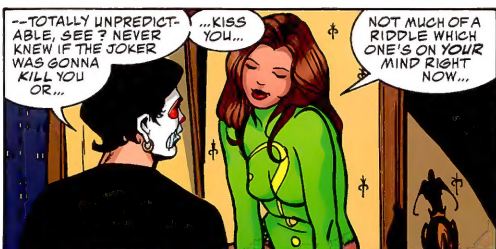
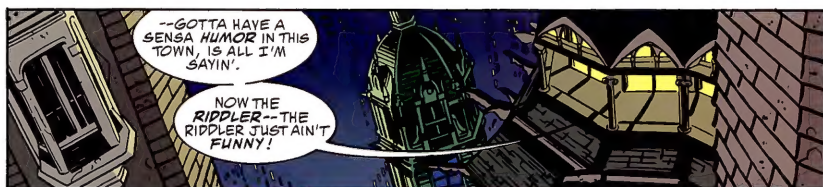
FORGET THE
CRIMINALS--
GOTHAM'S CITY
PLANNERS ARE
THE ONES WHO
SHOULD BE
BEHIND
BARS!

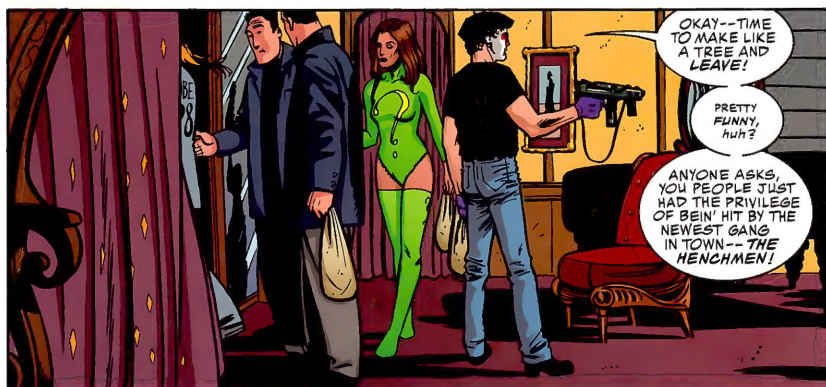
IT'S ALMOST
AS IF THE ENTIRE
CITY WAS ONE
SPRAWLING HAUNTED
HOUSE, POPULATED
BY DEMONS
AND...



...GHOSTS.

BATMAN?





OKAY--TIME
TO MAKE LIKE
A TREE AND
LEAVE!

PRETTY
FUNNY,
Huh?

ANYONE ASKS,
YOU PEOPLE JUST
HAD THE PRIVILEGE
OF BEIN' HIT BY THE
NEWEST GANG
IN TOWN-- THE
HENCHMEN!



GONE--
THANK
GOD!

SHOULDN'T...SHOULDN'T
SOMEONE CALL THE
POLICE?

THEY'VE PROBABLY
ALREADY BEEN
BOUGHT OFF.

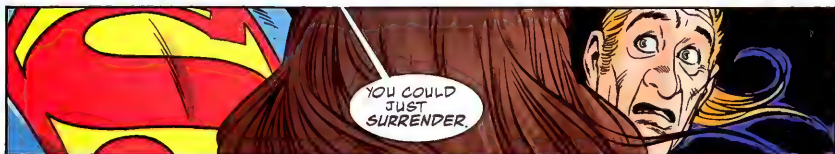
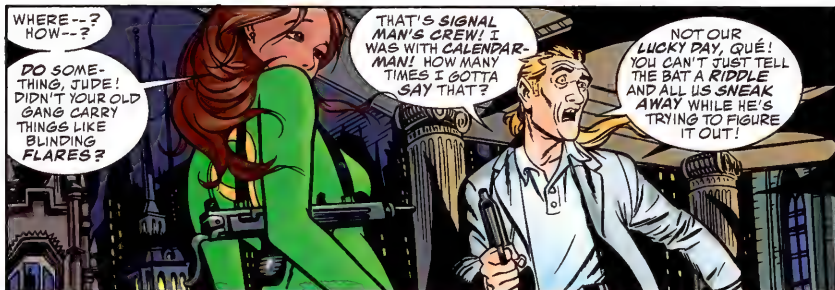
LET'S JUST HOPE
WE'VE SEEN THE
LAST OF--

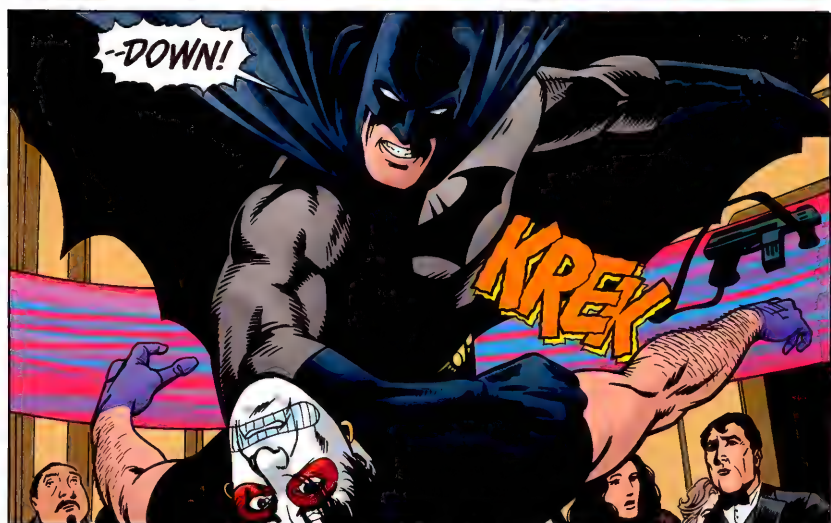


KWOK



BAT
MAN







NEVER
SAW ANYONE
MOVE LIKE
THAT

REALLY
IS FASTER
THAN A
SPEEDING
BULLET

WITH
HIS BARE
HANDS

LIKE A
DEMON

HIS FACE!
DID YOU SEE
HIS



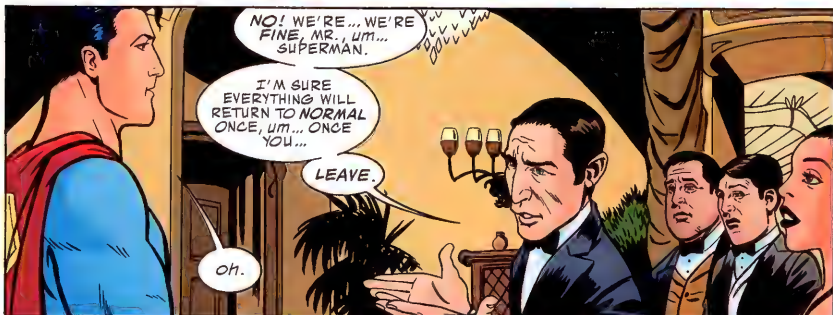
YOU! CALL THE
POLICE! ASK FOR
GORDON!

GORDON!



I'M SURE HE
MEANS "PLEASE
CALL THE
POLICE."

ANYTHING
ELSE WE CAN
DO?

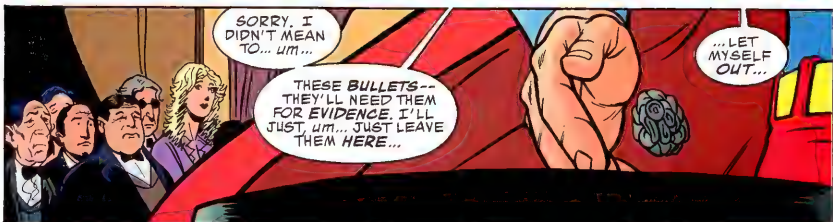


NO! WE'RE... WE'RE
FINE, MR. UM...
SUPERMAN.

I'M SURE
EVERYTHING WILL
RETURN TO NORMAL
ONCE, UM... ONCE
YOU...

LEAVE.

OH.



SORRY, I
DIDN'T MEAN
TO... UM...

THESE BULLETS--
THEY'LL NEED THEM
FOR EVIDENCE. I'LL
JUST, UM... JUST LEAVE
THEM HERE...

...LET
MYSELF
OUT...



YOU KNOW-- PEOPLE MIGHT NOT BE SO AFRAID OF YOU IF YOU DIDN'T SHOUT ORDERS AT THEM.

IF YOU CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS A LITTLE AND LET THEM GET TO KNOW YOU.



LET YOU IN ON A LITTLE SECRET, SUPERMAN-- I CAN'T FLY. BULLETS DON'T BOUNCE OFF MY CHEST. I CAN'T BEND STEEL IN MY BARE HANDS.

BUT CRIMINALS FEAR ME.

I'M SORRY NORMAL CITIZENS DO, TOO-- BUT I'D RATHER HAVE THAT THAN WORD ON THE STREET SAYING WHAT A NICE GUY I AM.

THAT SORT OF TALK COULD GET ME KILLED.



IS THAT WHY YOU DIDN'T JOIN THE JUSTICE LEAGUE?

ALL THAT WOULD UNDERMINE THE CAREFUL WORK YOU'VE PUT INTO YOUR PERSONA, WOULDN'T IT?

ALL THAT MEDIA COVERAGE, PRESS CONFERENCES, BEING SEEN AS PART OF AN ACCEPTED, ADMIRABLE GROUP-- BEING SEEN IN THE DAYLIGHT!

BATMAN?



THINK
WHATEVER
YOU WANT.

I WOULDN'T
BECOME A MEM-
BER OF THE JLA
EVEN IF THEY
DID ASK. TOO
BUSY.

OR WAS
THAT YOUR
EXCUSE?

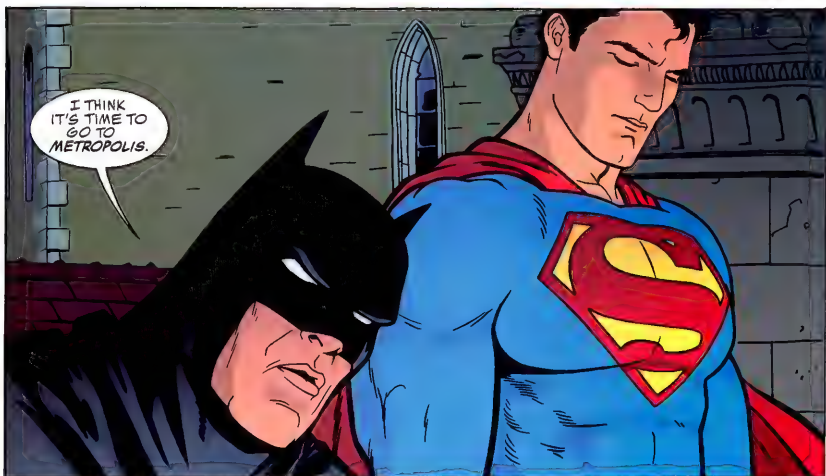
ONE OF THEM...
THOUGH SOMETIMES
I WISH I HAD
JOINED.



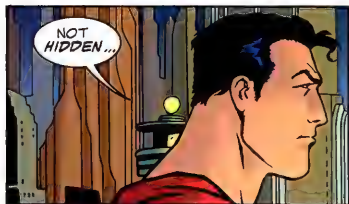
TO HAVE PEOPLE TO TALK
TO... TO SHARE MY PROBLEMS
AND WORRIES WITH... SOME-
ONE WHO WOULD UNDER-
STAND THEM.

COLLEAGUES.
FRIENDS.

I THINK THAT'S
WHAT ALL OF US
WANT--DON'T
YOU?



I THINK
IT'S TIME TO
GO TO
METROPOLIS.

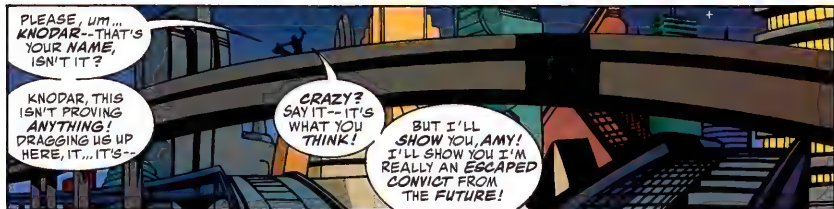


NOT
HIDDEN...



...YOU JUST HAVE
TO KNOW HOW TO LOOK
FOR IT.

STOP!
LET GO OF
ME!

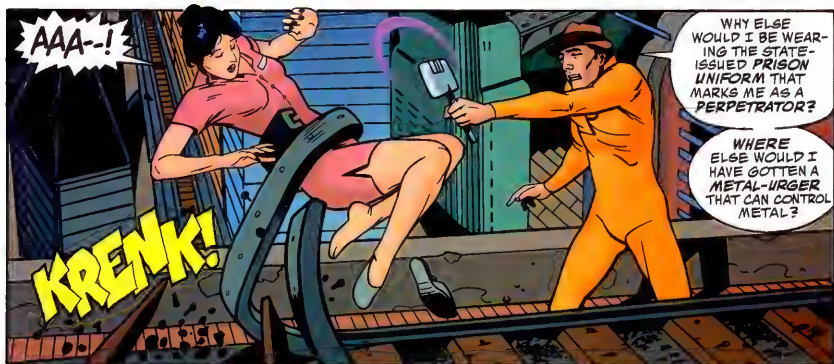


PLEASE, UM...
KNOPAR--THAT'S
YOUR NAME,
ISN'T IT?

KNOPAR, THIS
ISN'T PROVING
ANYTHING!
DRAGGING US UP
HERE, IT... IT'S--

CRAZY?
SAY IT-- IT'S
WHAT YOU
THINK!

BUT I'LL
SHOW YOU, AMY!
I'LL SHOW YOU I'M
REALLY AN ESCAPED
CONVICT FROM
THE FUTURE!



AAA--!

KRENK!

WHY ELSE
WOULD I BE WEAR-
ING THE STATE-
ISSUED PRISON
UNIFORM THAT
MARKS ME AS A
PERPETRATOR?

WHERE
ELSE WOULD I
HAVE GOTTEN A
METAL-URGER
THAT CAN CONTROL
METAL?



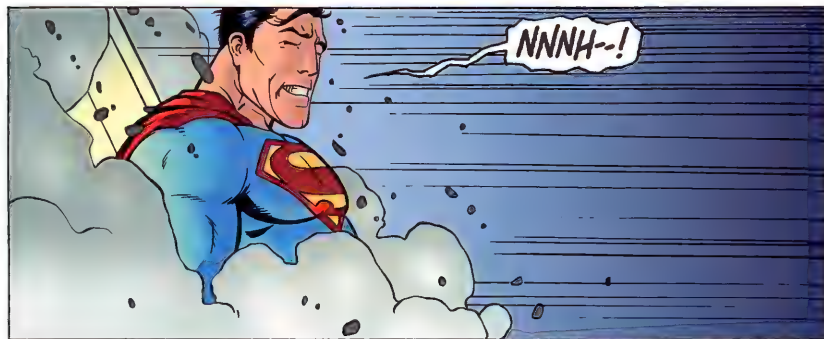
YOU SEE, MY LOVE,
ALTHOUGH WE NEVER
MET BEFORE TODAY,
WE WERE MEANT TO
BE TOGETHER!

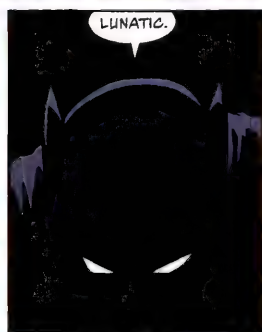
YOU AND I ARE GOING TO
HAVE A CHILD, AMY--THE FIRST
IN A LONG LINE THAT WILL
EVENTUALLY PRODUCE ME IN
THE 25TH CENTURY!

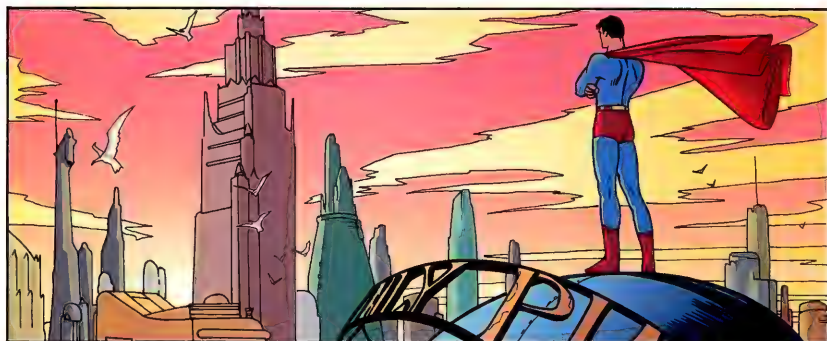
BUT SINCE WE
HAVEN'T HAD THAT CHILD
YET-- WE CAN'T BE KILLED,
OR A TIME PARADOX
WOULD RESULT!

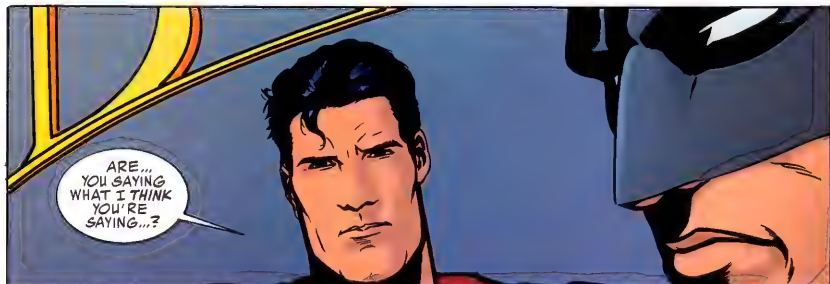
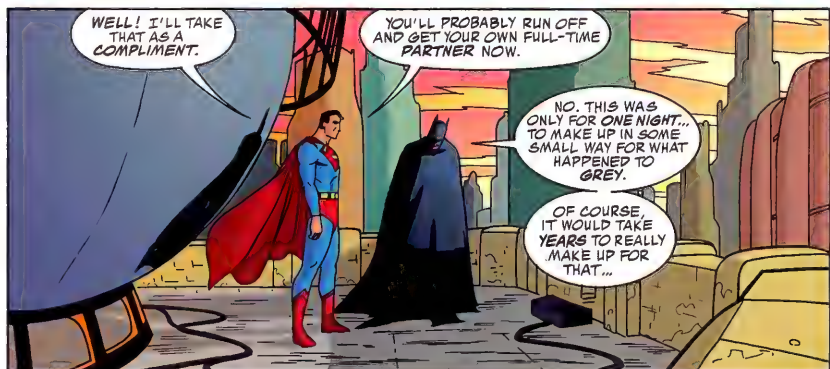
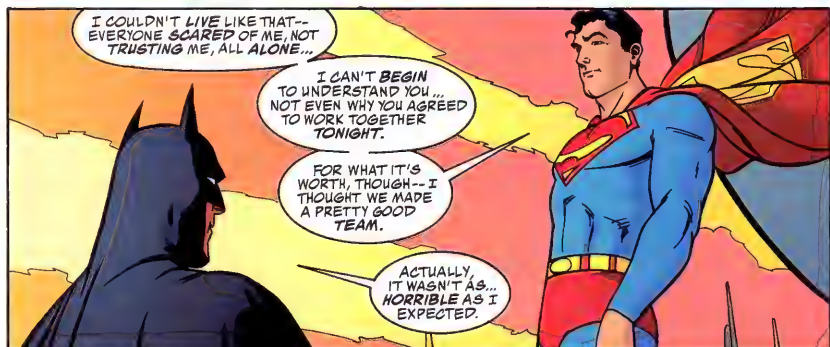
WHEN THAT
TRAIN HITS US AND
WE LIVE-- THEN YOU'LL
BELIEVE I'M FROM THE
FUTURE! THEN YOU'LL
KNOW I'M NOT
CRAZY--

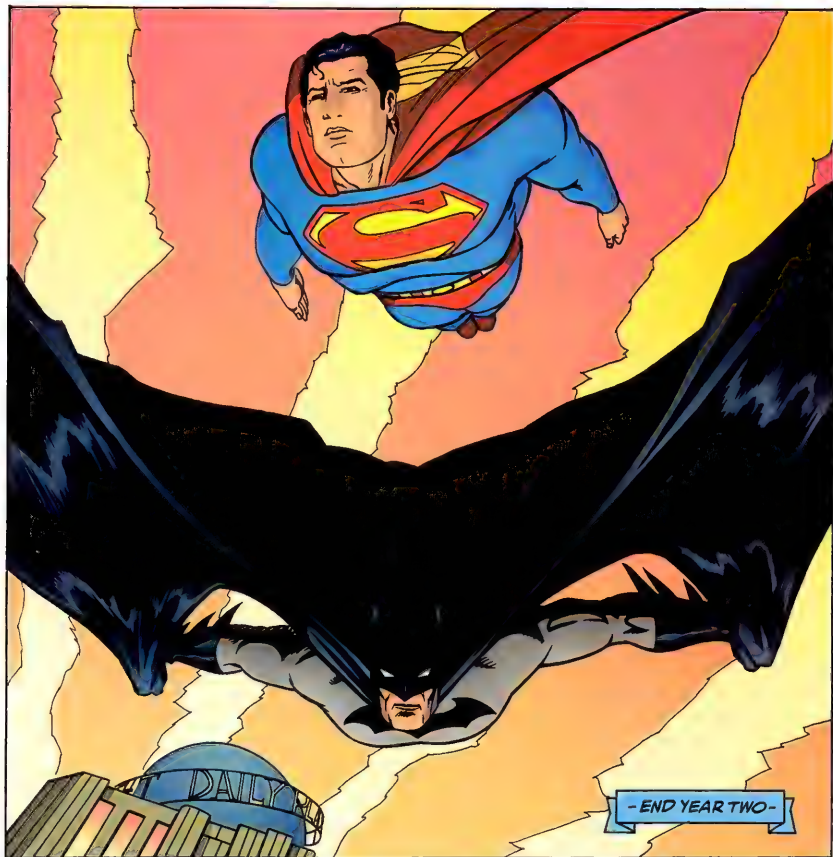
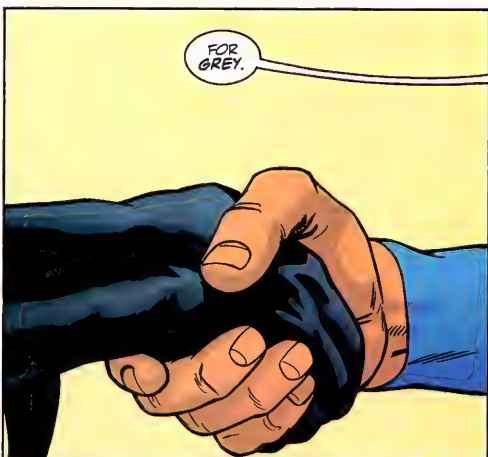












Belonging

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I DON'T RECALL HAVING ANY REAL FRIENDS AS A CHILD EVEN BEFORE THE... THE INCIDENT. BEFORE MY PARENTS WERE MURDERED.

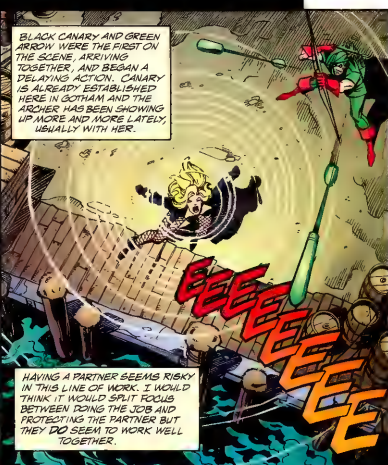
THERE WERE THE OTHER KIDS AT SCHOOL, CERTAINLY. WE PLAYED TOGETHER, I IMAGINE. AND THERE WERE THE CHILDREN OF MY PARENTS' FRIENDS. WE HAD "PLAY DATES," I THINK. I REALLY DON'T REMEMBER THAT TIME ALL THAT WELL.

EVEN THEN, I ENJOYED READING BOOKS MORE, AND GOING TO MOVIES, AND LISTENING TO MUSIC. LOST IN MY OWN WORLD MY MOTHER CLAIMED I HAD AN "OLD SOUL."

I DO HAVE A KEEN MEMORY OF STANDING OUTSIDE A CHAIN LINK FENCE LOOKING INTO THE PLAYGROUND.

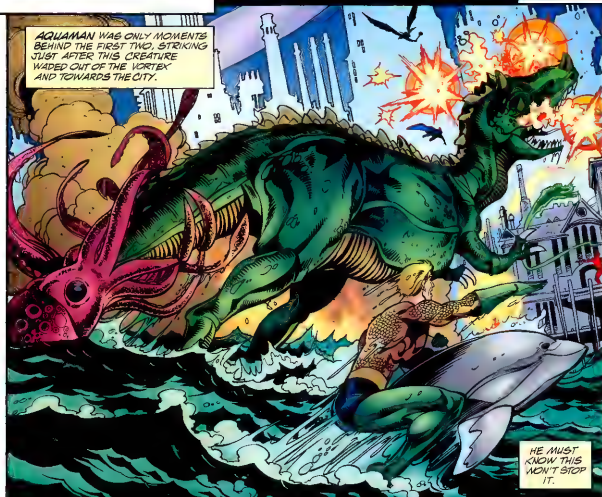


WATCHING THE
OTHER CHILDREN
PLAY.



BLACK CANARY AND GREEN
ARROW WERE THE FIRST ON
THE SCENE, ARRIVING
TOGETHER, AND BEGAN A
DELAYING ACTION. CANARY
IS ALREADY ESTABLISHED
HERE IN GOTHAM AND THE
ARCHER HAS BEEN SHOWING
UP MORE AND MORE LATELY,
USUALLY WITH HER.

HAVING A PARTNER SEEMS RISKY
IN THIS LINE OF WORK. I WOULD
THINK IT WOULD SPLIT FOCUS
BETWEEN DOING THE JOB AND
PROTECTING THE PARTNER BUT
THEY DO SEEM TO WORK WELL
TOGETHER.



AQUAMAN WAS ONLY MOMENTS
BEHIND THE FIRST TWO, STRIKING
JUST AFTER THIS CREATURE
WADED OUT OF THE VORTEX
AND TOWARDS THE CITY.

HE MUST
KNOW THIS
AON'T STOP
IT.

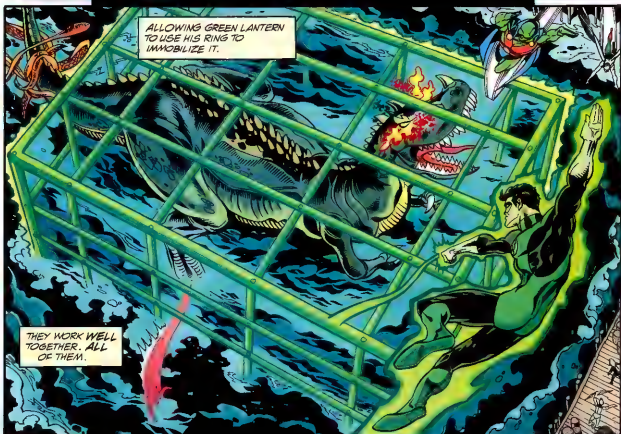
I SEE, DELAYING TACTIC UNTIL THE REST OF THE LEAGUE CAN RESPOND. HAWKMAN AND THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER STRIKE SO CLOSELY TOGETHER I WONDER IF THE MARTIAN IS USING HIS TELEPATHY TO COORDINATE THE ATTACK.



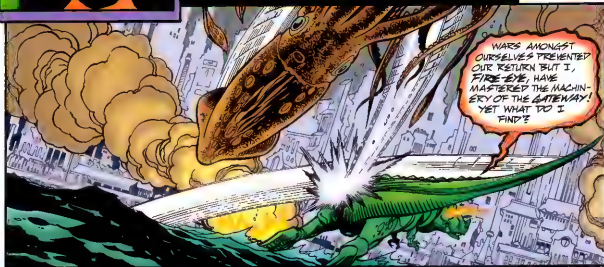
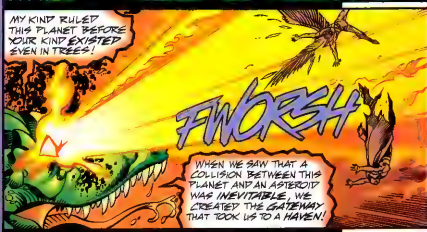
THE FLASH USES HIS SPEED TO DISORIENT AND CONFUSE THE BEAST.

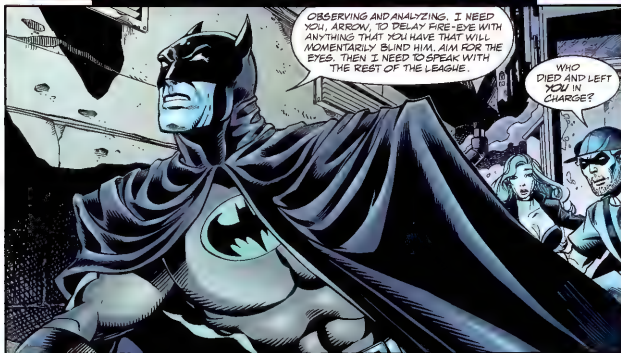
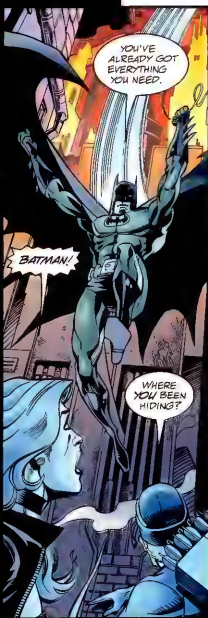


ALLOWING GREEN LANTERN TO USE HIS RING TO IMMOBILIZE IT.



THEY WORK WELL TOGETHER, ALL OF THEM.

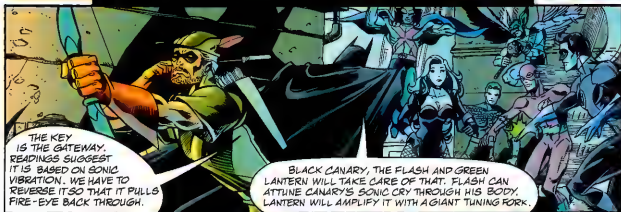






PEOPLE WILL DIE UNLESS WE CAN FORCE THIS BEAST BACK THROUGH THE GATEWAY AND CLOSE IT.

SHOOT
YOUR
ARROWS.



THE KEY IS THE GATEWAY. READINGS SUGGEST IT IS BASED ON SONIC VIBRATION. WE HAVE TO REVERSE IT SO THAT IT PULLS FIRE-EYE BACK THROUGH.

BLACK CANARY, THE FLASH AND GREEN LANTERN WILL TAKE CARE OF THAT. FLASH CAN ATTUNE CANARY'S SONIC CRY THROUGH HIS BODY. LANTERN WILL AMPLIFY IT WITH A GIANT TUNING FORK.



AQUAMAN, YOUR ORIGINAL PLAN WAS A GOOD ONE. REGROUP AND RE-ATTACK. HAWKMAN, AUGMENT GREEN ARROW'S DIVERSION. SHOOT AND AIM FOR THE EYES.

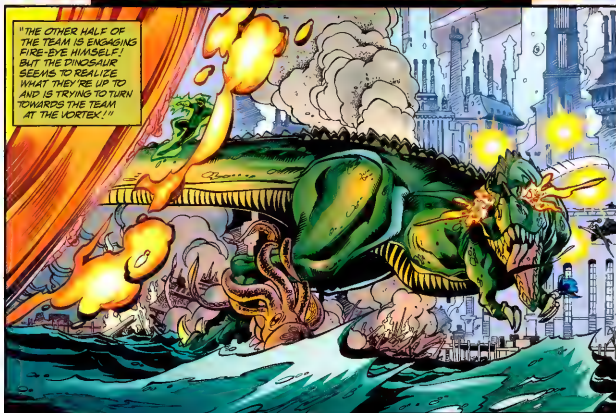
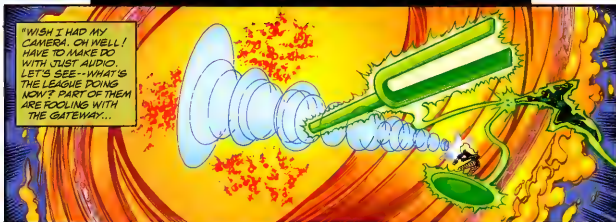
MANHUNTER, WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOUR STRENGTH WILL HAVE TO PUSH FIRE-EYE THROUGH THE REVERSED GATEWAY. ANY QUESTIONS?



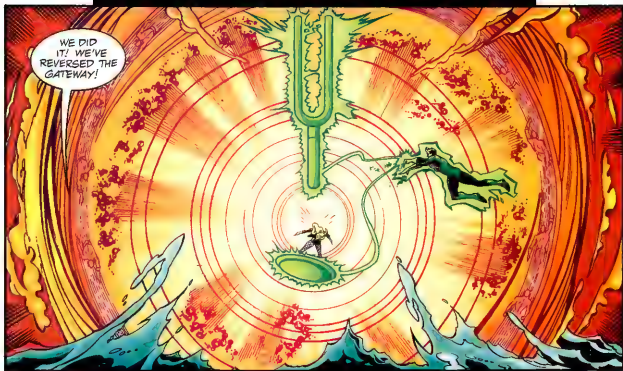
I'LL KEEP THE CURIOUS BACK AND OUT OF DANGER.
MOVE.

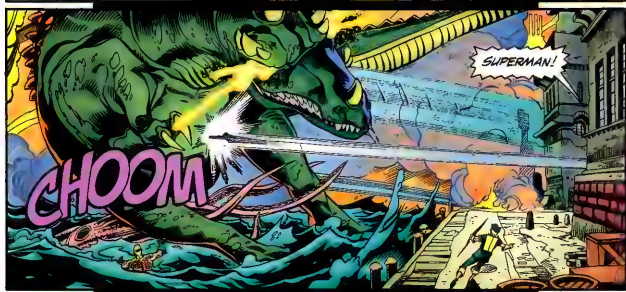
IT'S A GOOD PLAN.

MAYBE. CAN'T SAY I MUCH CARE FOR THE MAN'S MANNER.













I'LL BE FINE, THANKS. GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. YOUR HELP WAS VERY WELCOME.

YOU WERE HANDLING IT JUST FINE. YOU DIDN'T REALLY NEED ME.

NOR DO YOU NEED ME ANY LONGER...



HEY, SUPERMAN! YOU GOING TO MAKE IT OFFICIAL?

EXCUSE ME?



NAME'S TULLY REED. I REPORT ON YOU GUYS FOR THE INTERNET AND CABLE ACCESS. SO WHAT ABOUT IT? YOU GOING TO JOIN THE JUSTICE LEAGUE FULL TIME OR WHAT?

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT IT BEFORE BUT I HAVE A LOT OF DEMANDS...



YOU BEEN SAYING THAT EVER SINCE THE LEAGUE WAS FORMED! C'MON! WHAT'S THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHERO TEAM WITHOUT THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHERO?

YOU WAITING UNTIL SOMEBODY DIES OR SOMETHING?



NO

SHORTLY
THEREAFTER...

CUTE. SUPERMAN
UNILATERALLY ANNOUNCES
HE'S JOINING THE LEAGUE
AND THEN TAKES OFF
WITHOUT HELPING WITH
THE CLEAN-UP!

HAWKMAN AND ATOM HAD
TO LEAVE, TOO, AND THAT
DOESN'T BOTHER YOU.
SUPERMAN JUST TOOK US
UP ON OUR STANDING
OFFER TO JOIN.

IT'S
BATMAN
THAT
BOTHERS
ME.

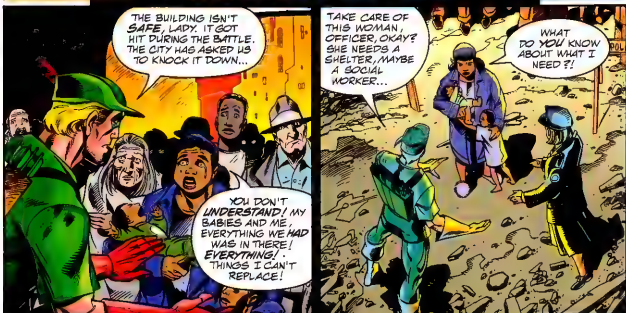
WHY IS THAT? I HAVE
THE DEEPEST RESPECT
FOR HIS MIND AND
INSTINCTS. I THINK HE
WOULD BE A FINE
ADDITION TO THE LEAGUE.

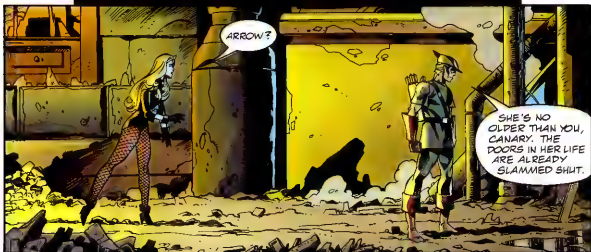
HE JUST
COMES IN AND
STARTS BARKING
ORDERS AS IF WE
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT
WE WERE DOING.

HE HAD A BETTER PLAN THAN WE
DID AND I SENSED NO DISRESPECT
IN HIM AT ALL. MERELY A DESIRE
TO GET THE JOB DONE IN THE MOST
EFFICIENT MANNER POSSIBLE.

CHOMP
GROMP
CHOMP

WE COULD CERTAINLY
USE HIM. I WONDER
IF HE COULD USE US.





ARROW?

SHE'S NO OLDER THAN YOU, CANARY. THE DOORS IN HER LIFE ARE ALREADY SLAMMED SHUT.



I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL BUT, GA., THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO!



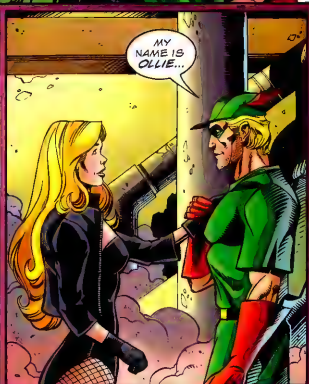
MAYBE THERE SHOULD BE! MAYBE WE SHOULD FIND A WAY! WE FIGHT INJUSTICE! WE FIGHT EVIL, RIGHT?!

ISN'T WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HER AND OTHERS LIKE HER EVIL?!



YES, IT IS. AND THERE ARE THOSE WHO FIGHT IT. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THE LEAGUE DOES. THE LEAGUE FIGHTS MENACES LIKE FIRE-EYE.

YOU'RE A PASSIONATE MAN, ARROW. THAT'S WHAT I... LIKE MOST ABOUT YOU. THAT PASSION. IT DRAWS ME...



MY NAME IS OLLIE...

THE MORNING PAPER, SIR. I'M SURE IT IS STILL MORNING SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD.



GOTHAM EXAMINER

SUPERMAN JOINS JLA

By Vicki Vale

STAFF WRITER
PHOTOGRAPHER
EDITOR
MANAGING EDITOR

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR
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SO SUPERMAN DECIDED TO JOIN THEM.

THEY ONCE ASKED ME TO JOIN, YOU KNOW.

WHAT A SPLENDID IDEA, SIR. YOU HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED SO WELL WITH OTHER CHILDREN.



ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT I'M NOT A GOOD TEAM PLAYER, ALFRED?

NOT AT ALL, SIR--AS LONG AS THE OTHERS IN THE TEAM DO PRECISELY AS YOU SAY.

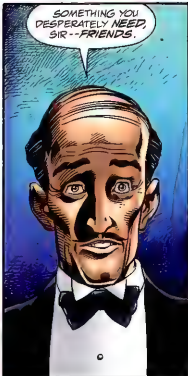


I HAVE CONSIDERED IT, ALFRED. JOINING THE LEAGUE. IT WOULD BE A WAY OF EXTENDING WHAT I DO OUTSIDE OF GOTHAM. I THINK I HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER THEM.

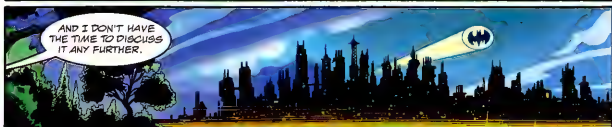


WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, MASTER BRUCE, PERHAPS THE LEAGUE HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER YOU AS WELL.

WHAT'S THAT?



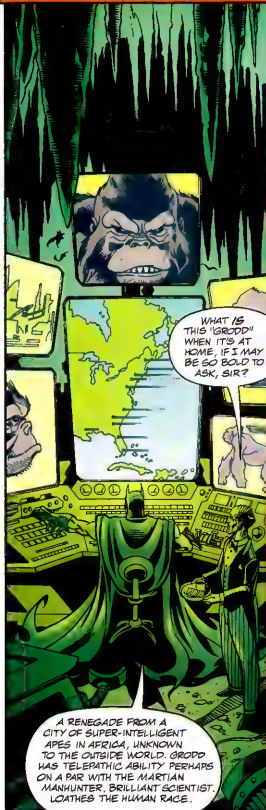
SOMETHING YOU DESPERATELY NEED, SIR--FRIENDS.





"GRODD"? WHAT'S
A "GRODD"? ARE
YOU SWEARING,
BATMAN?

BATMAN?



WHAT IS
THIS "GRODD"
WHEN IT'S AT
HOME, IF I MAY
BE SO BOLD TO
ASK, SIR?

A RENEGADE FROM A
CITY OF SUPER-INTELLIGENT
APES IN AFRICA, UNKNOWN
TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, GRODD
HAS TELEPATHIC ABILITY PERHAPS
ON A PAR WITH THE MARTIAN
MANHUNTER, BRILLIANT SCIENTIST.
LOATHES THE HUMAN RACE.



WHAT WAS HE
DOING IN THE
GOTHAM ZOO?
ON LOAN FROM
SOMEPLACE?

STEALING
SOME OF THE
APES, NO DOUBT
HE WOULD THINK
OF IT AS
"LIBERATION."

EVERY ZOO ON THE
EASTERN SEABOARD HAS
BEEN HIT--EXCEPT FOR
THE NATIONAL ZOO IN
WASHINGTON.

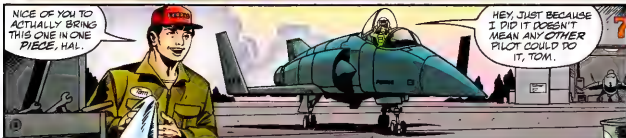


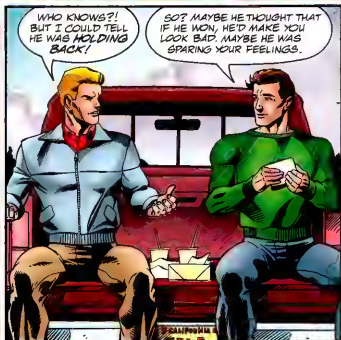
PRESUMABLY, HE WILL
HIT THAT NEXT--OR HE
IS USING IT AS THE
STAGING AREA FOR
SOMETHING ELSE.

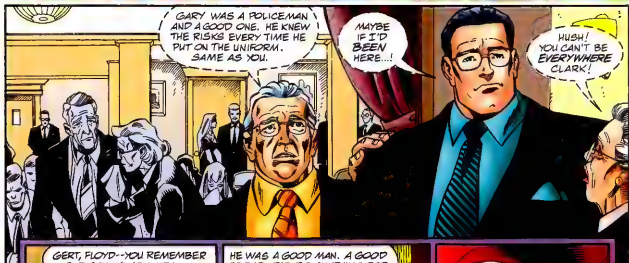
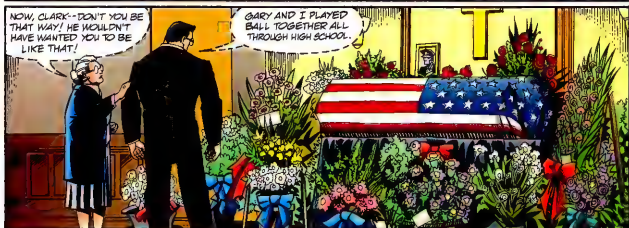
PERHAPS
THIS WOULD
BE A GOOD
TIME TO MAKE
CONTACT WITH
THE JUSTICE
LEAGUE, SIR?
POOL
RESOURCES?
WORK
TOGETHER?



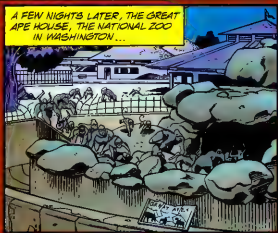
WHY?







A FEW NIGHTS LATER, THE GREAT APE HOUSE, THE NATIONAL ZOO IN WASHINGTON...



COME IN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, COME IN AND HEED.

YOU HAVE ALL BEEN AMPLIFIED. YOU HAVE ALL RECEIVED YOUR INSTRUCTIONS. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT TO DO AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU.



WE STRIKE AT DAWN.





THIS IS TULLY REED WITH A SUPERVISION BREAKING STORY! THE RESIDENTS OF THE APE HOUSES AT THE WASHINGTON ZOO HAVE STORMED THE BARRICADES, STAGED A COUP AND NOW ARE IN CONTROL OF WASHINGTON, D.C.!

THE COUP WAS MASTERMINDED AND IMPLEMENTED BY **GORILLA GRODD**, A SUPER-INTELLIGENT CRIMINAL APE FROM A MYSTERIOUS CITY OF SUPER-APES.

YOUR IDEA OF DEMOCRACY **INSULTS** ME! WHILE YOU HUMANS MAY BE EQUAL TO ONE ANOTHER-- A CONCEPT I AM SURE YOU YOURSELVES BELIEVE-- YOU CERTAINLY ARE NOT EQUAL TO ME!

THIS IS THE STRONGEST COUNTRY ON EARTH? FINE. NOW IT IS MINE!

NEW LEADERS HAVE BEEN
HERDED INTO THE HABITATS
UNTIL RECENTLY OCCUPIED BY
MY CYBERSIMIAN. IF MORE
SPACE IS REQUIRED, WE WILL
SPREAD THEM TO OTHER
HABITATS.

OF COURSE, THEY WILL HAVE
TO LEARN TO SHARE WITH THOSE
ALREADY INHABITING THOSE
AREAS... BUT YOU HUMANS ARE
SO ADAPTABLE, AREN'T YOU?"



IF STILL MORE SPACE
IS REQUIRED OR THE
REST OF YOU OUT THERE
GROW RESTLESS UNDER
MY RULE, KEEP IN MIND
THAT IT IS NOW MY
FINGER ON THE NUCLEAR
BUTTON AND I HAVE
NO QUALMS ABOUT
THINNING YOUR HERD.



AS OF NOW,
I AM THE
DOMINANT
SPECIES

THAT'S THE STORY, GANG. ALL THE MAJOR
MEDIA GUYS ARE SHUT DOWN. SO FAR
THEY'VE OVERLOOKED LITTLE GUYS LIKE
ME BROADCASTING ON CABLE ACCESS.

THEY'LL COME FOR ME SOONER OR
LATER. I KNOW THAT. BUT I'M GOING TO
KEEP ON TRYING TO GET THE TRUTH OUT
TO YOU FOR AS LONG AS I CAN. MY
MESSAGE RIGHT NOW IS-- DON'T GIVE
UP HOPE.

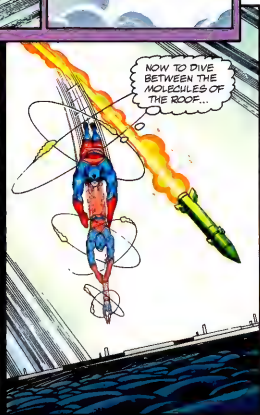
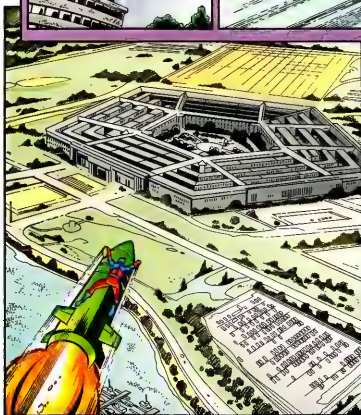


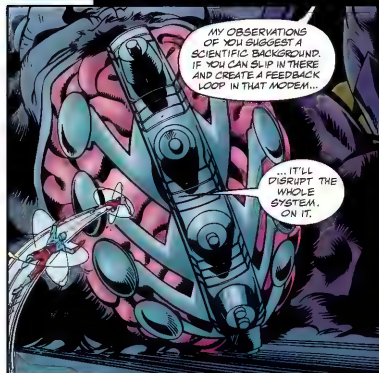
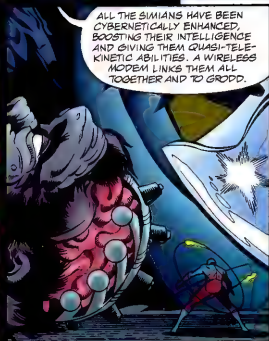
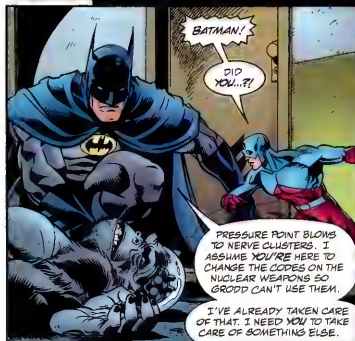
"TRUST THE
LEAGUE!"

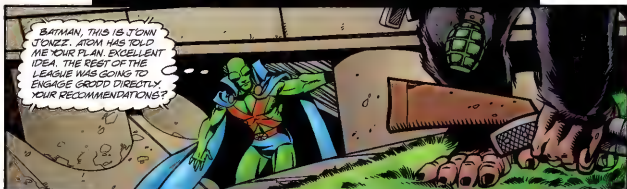
YOU
READY,
ATOM?

SHOOT!

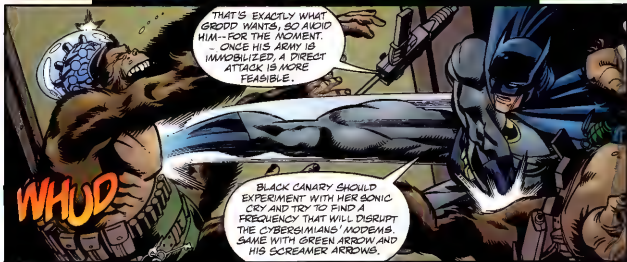








BATMAN, THIS IS J'ONN J'ONZZ. ATOM HAS TOLD ME YOUR PLAN. EXCELLENT IDEA. THE REST OF THE LEAGUE WAS GOING TO ENGAGE GRODD DIRECTLY. YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS?



THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT GRODD WANTS, SO AVOID HIM--FOR THE MOMENT. ONCE HIS ARMY IS IMMOBILIZED, A DIRECT ATTACK IS MORE FEASIBLE.

WHUD

BLACK CANARY SHOULD EXPERIMENT WITH HER SONIC CRY AND TRY TO FIND A FREQUENCY THAT WILL DISRUPT THE CYBERSIMIANS' MODEMS. SAME WITH GREEN ARROW AND HIS SCREAMER ARROWS.



AQUAMAN'S TELEPATHY IS LIMITED, BUT PERHAPS TOGETHER HE AND YOU CAN SCRAMBLE THE CYBERSIMIANS' RECEPTION.

THUD

GREEN LANTERN CAN TRY A GIANT TUNING FORK OR AMPLIFY BLACK CANARY. FLASH SHOULD TRY A SERIES OF SONIC BOOMS. AND HAWKMAN...

...TELL HAWKMAN TO HIT THEM UNTIL THEY FALL DOWN. I'LL RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU.

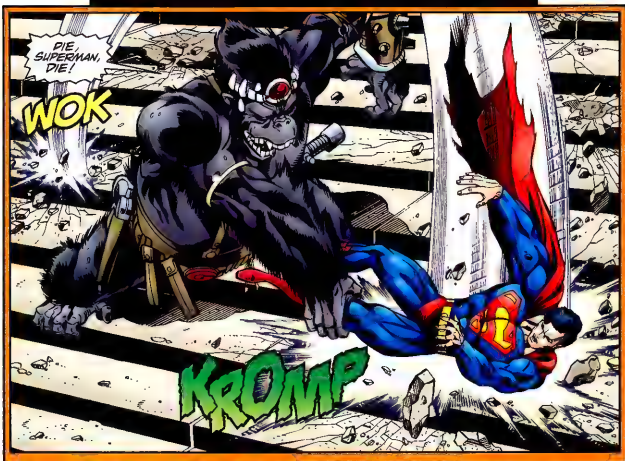


A SITUATION HAS ARISEN. SUPERMAN HAS ARRIVED AND HE'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR GRODD

NO, I CAN'T STOP HIM. HE'S NOT LISTENING. HE'S FOCUSED ON TAKING OUT GRODD AND THEN HE THINKS THE REST WILL FALL.







HE WON'T BE OF ANY HELP,
EITHER. HE NOW THINKS
HE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
DESERT WITHOUT ANY WATER
AND HAS BEEN FOR MORE
THAN A DAY.



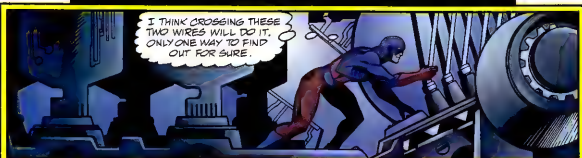
SPREADING YOURSELF
THIN, AREN'T YOU, GRODD?
TRYING TO CONTROL
THEIR MINDS AND
BEAT ME AT THE
SAME TIME?



NO SPECIAL EFFORT
REQUIRED FOR YOU,
MARTIAN.

ALL I HAVE
TO DO IS MAKE
YOU THINK OF
FIRE. NOTHING
BUT FIRE...









ACCORDING TO THE YETS, THE APES AND THEIR FRIENDS WILL BE ALL RIGHT ONCE THE REMAINS OF THE CYBERMINDS ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR HEADS.

ATOM SAYS YOU CHANGED THE NUCLEAR CODES AND COORDINATED AN ATTACK PLAN. GOOD WORK, BATMAN.



THAT'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE CERTAIN OF BEFORE DIRECTLY ATTACKING GRODD. WHAT IF HE HAD UNLEASHED THE MISSILES?

AND YOU SHOULD'VE CHECKED IN WITH THE LEAGUE BEFORE ATTACKING ALONE. RESCUING YOU NEARLY GOT TWO MEMBERS KILLED.



IS IT MY IMAGINATION OR IS BATMAN CHEWING OUT THE MAN OF STEEL?

HE HAS A POINT



IN MY EXPERIENCE, YOU TAKE OUT THE GUY CAUSING THE SITUATION, THE SITUATION IS OVER.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A PART OF A TEAM.

I WAS TRYING TO PROTECT THEM.

WHY? THEY'RE CAPABLE OF PROTECTING THEMSELVES. YOU'RE NOT TREATING THEM AS YOUR EQUALS.



AND YOUR COMING IN AND BARKING ORDERS AT EVERYONE IS TREATING THEM LIKE EQUALS?

YES.



I KNOW AND I RESPECT WHAT THEY CAN DO. IF I HAVE A PLAN AND I NEED THEM TO DO SOMETHING, I TELL THEM WHAT IT IS.

BECAUSE I KNOW THEY CAN DO IT.



I KNOW THEIR ABILITIES, I KNOW THEIR SKILLS, BUT ABOVE ALL I KNOW THEIR DEDICATION. I TRUST THEM TO DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE--WHATEVER THE COST.



IF THEY'RE WILLING TO FOLLOW MY LEAD WITHOUT QUESTION, IT'S BECAUSE THEY TRUST ME AND THAT'S NOT SOMETHING I TAKE LIGHTLY.

EVER.



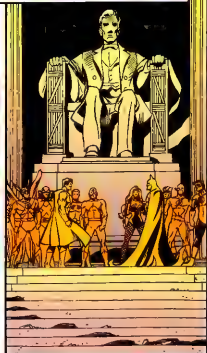
IT'S BEEN POINTED OUT TO ME BY OTHERS THAT I LACK CERTAIN... "SOCIAL SKILLS." I ACKNOWLEDGE IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE I'M NOT VERY POLITE. I'M NOT USED TO WORKING WITH OTHERS.

BUT I'D WORK WITH THE LEAGUE. ANY TIME. ANY PLACE.



BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I HAVE A GREAT RESPECT FOR YOU AS WELL.

YOU'LL CONSIDER WHAT I SAID. YOU'LL CONSIDER THE FACTS AND THEN YOU'LL DO WHAT'S RIGHT.





YOU ARE RIGHT. I THOUGHT I WAS READY TO BE A TEAM PLAYER BUT MAYBE I'M NOT. NOT YET, AND UNTIL I AM, I SHOULDN'T BE A FULL-TIME MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE.



I THINK I CAN SPEAK FOR THE REST OF THE LEAGUE WHEN I SAY THAT, IF YOU WANT IT, A PLACE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU, SUPERMAN.

THANKS. AND MAYBE I CAN KEEP MY HAND IN AS AN HONORARY MEMBER FOR THE TIME BEING. IN THE MEANTIME...



...I THINK THAT BATMAN SHOULD JOIN THE LEAGUE ON A FORMAL BASIS.



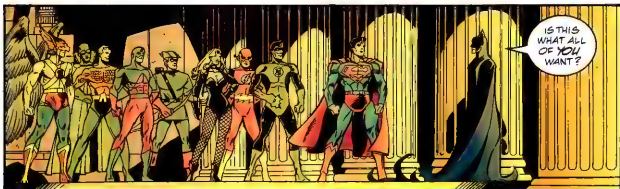
I DON'T WORK WELL WITH GROUPS.



YOU'VE WORKED WELL WITH THIS ONE. BUT IT'S UP TO YOU.

YOU'LL CONSIDER THE FACTS AND THEN YOU'LL DO WHAT'S RIGHT.







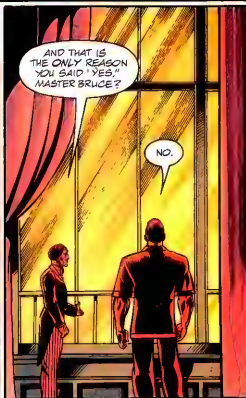
I MUST SAY
SIR THAT I'M
AMAZED YOU
ACCEPTED!



DELIGHTED
BUT
AMAZED!

WELL, THEY'RE
PREPARED TO ACCEPT
MY CONDITIONS.
THEY UNDERSTAND I
PREFER TO KEEP TO
THE SHADOWS, SO
THERE WILL BE NO
FORMAL
ANNOUNCEMENT.

THE LEAGUE WILL ALLOW
ME TO EXTEND MY MISSION
OUTSIDE OF GOTHAM IN A
MORE EFFICIENT MANNER.



AND THAT IS
THE ONLY REASON
YOU SAID 'YES,'
MASTER BRUCE?

NO.



YOU'VE SUGGESTED THAT I DON'T
PLAY WELL WITH OTHER CHILDREN
AND I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT. NOW
I'VE BEEN GIVEN A CHANCE. THE
'OTHER CHILDREN' HAVE INVITED
ME IN.



I HAVE A CHANCE TO
BE PART OF SOMETHING
ELSE. I'LL BE HONEST--
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN
CHANGE ENOUGH TO MAKE
IT WORK. MAYBE I WON'T
BE ABLE TO STAY.

BUT
AS OF
RIGHT
NOW...



...I
BELONG.

THE END

FEAR OF GOD

An open window
right above them
and they're
forcing the
padlock. Real
professional.

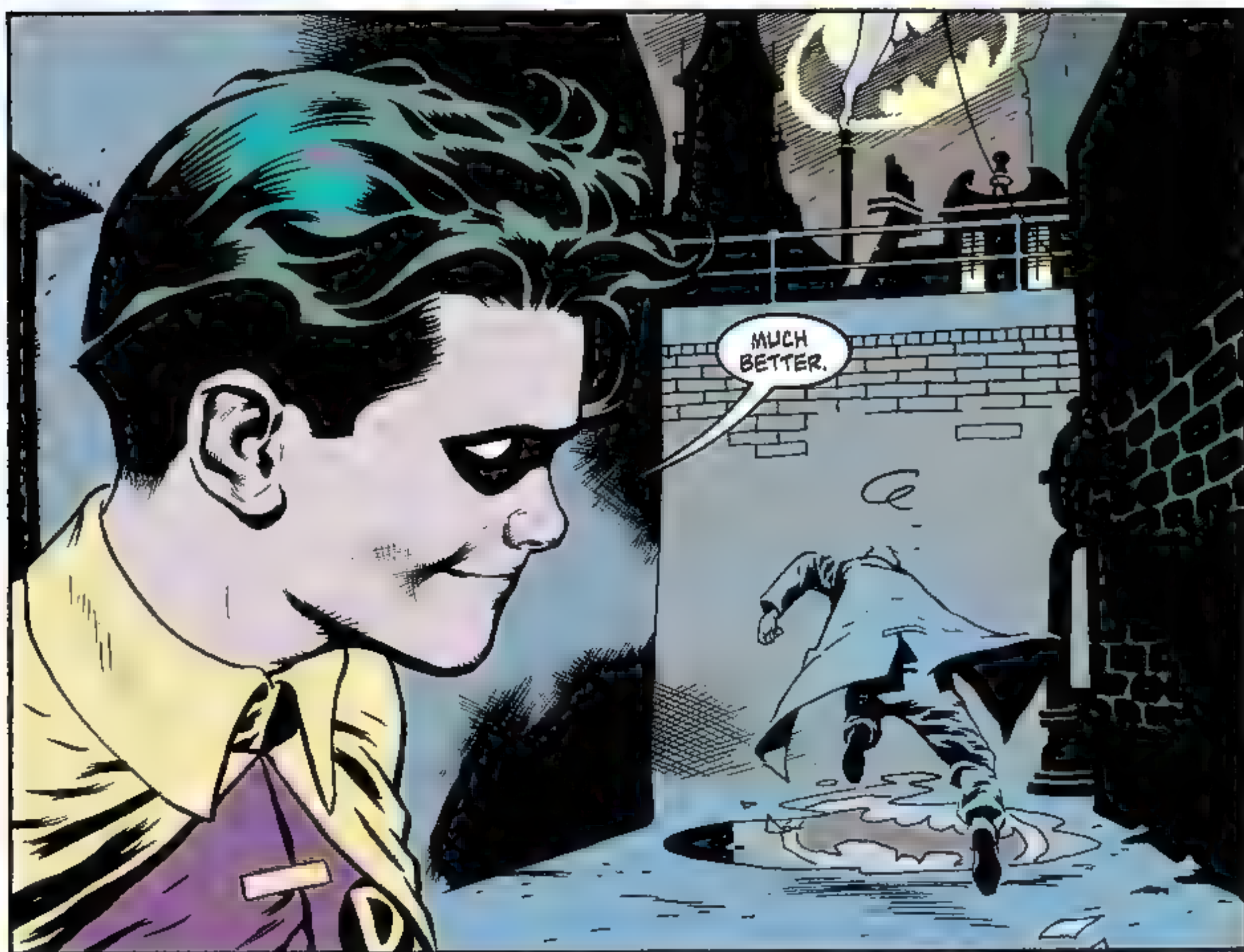
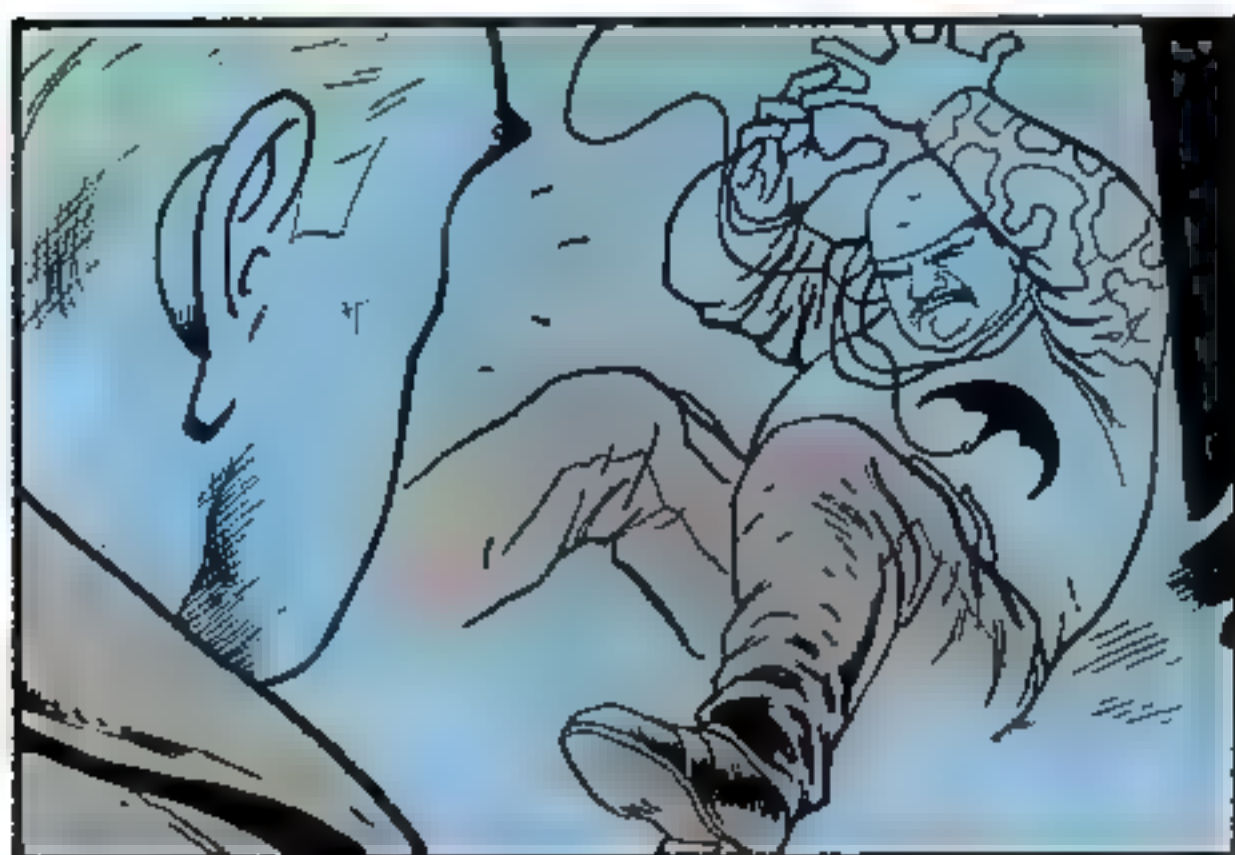
WORK
HIM, TONY.

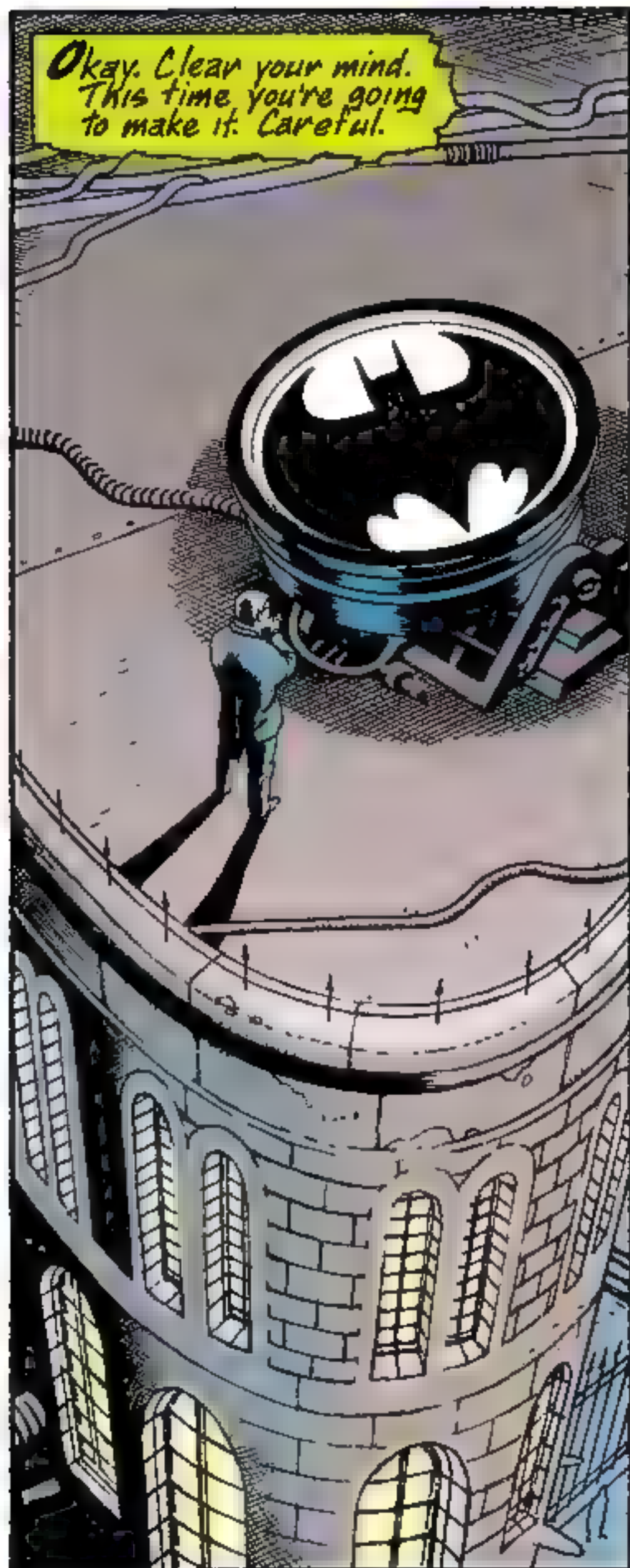
If I had half of
Batman's rep,
these guys would
scatter at the
sight of me.

KELLEY PUCKETT: STORY
DAVE TAYLOR: LAYOUTS
KEVIN NOWLAN: FINISHES
WILLIE SCHLIBERT: LETTERS
KEVIN NOWLAN: COLORS
DIGICHAM: SEPARATIONS
DARREN VINCENZO AND
SCOTT PETERSON: EDITS
SUPERMAN CREATED BY SIEGEL
AND SHUSTER









Okay. Clear your mind.
This time you're going
to make it. Careful.



Careful.



BATMAN NOT
COMING?

Unbelievable. How does
Batman sneak up on
this guy?



Something's wrong.
He looks almost...
nervous?

NO, SIR.
HE'S OUT OF TOWN FOR
THE EVENING. WHAT
IS IT?

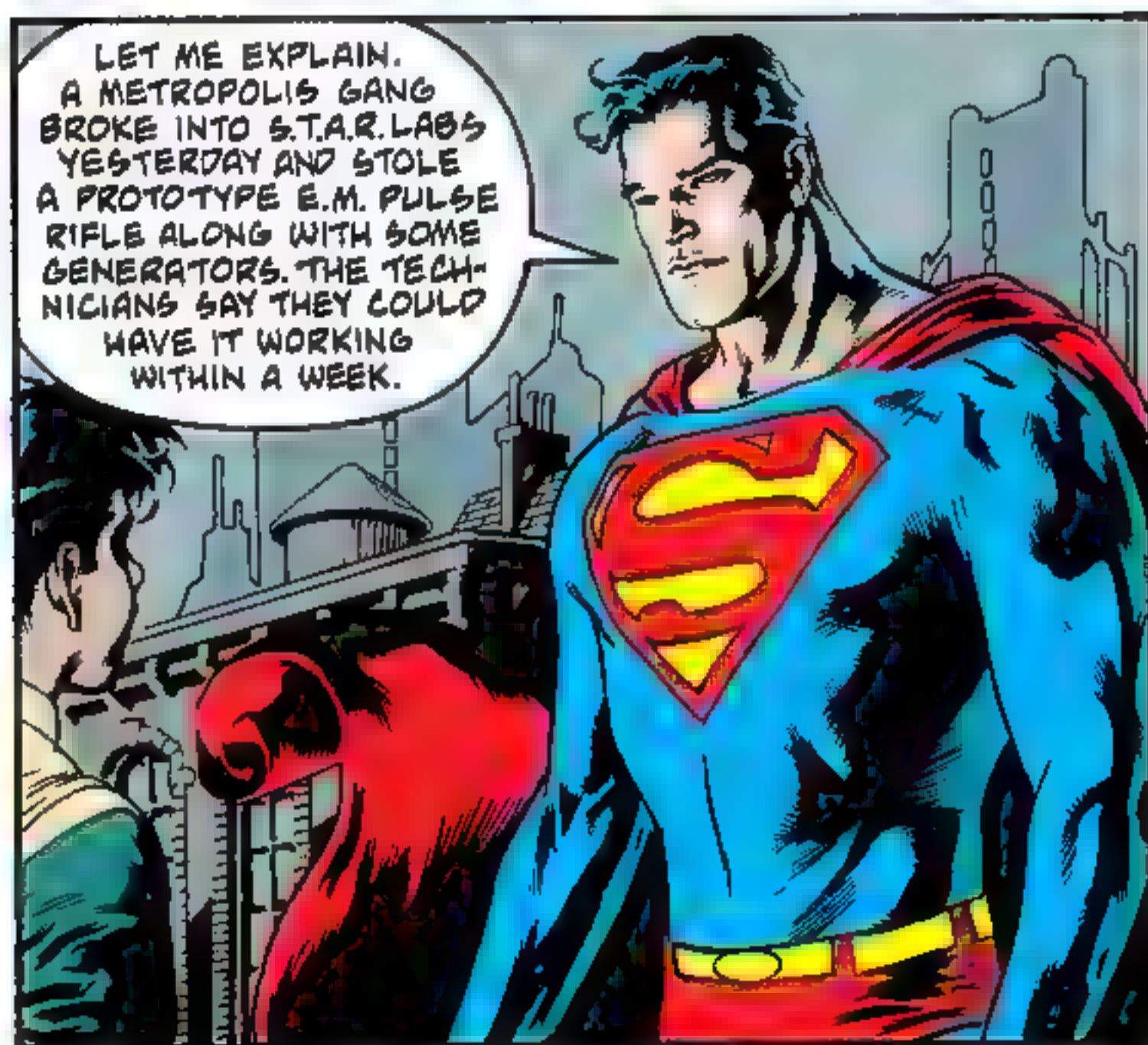
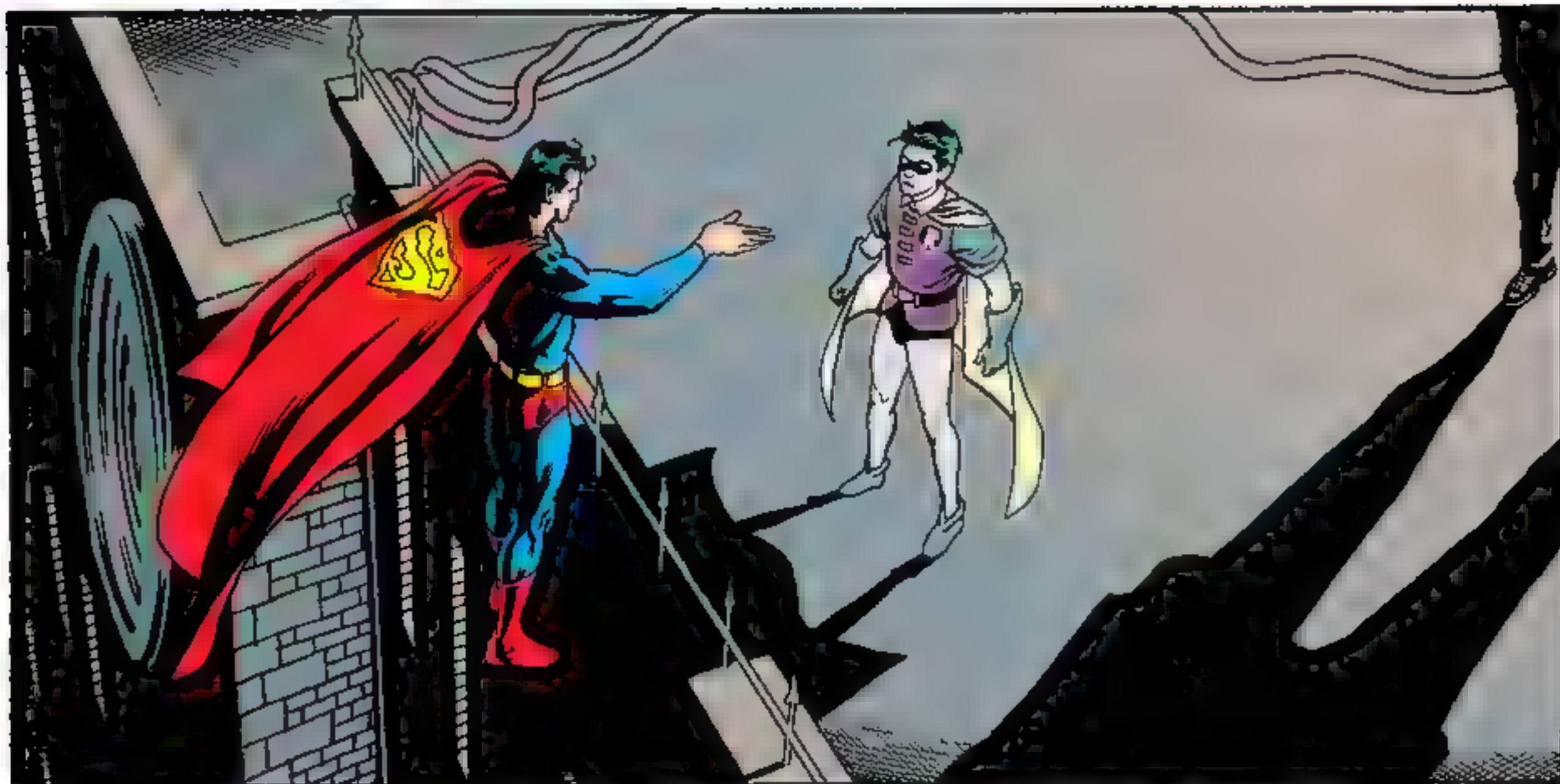
SOMEONE
WANTS TO TALK
TO YOU. SAID HE'D BE
RIGHT BACK.

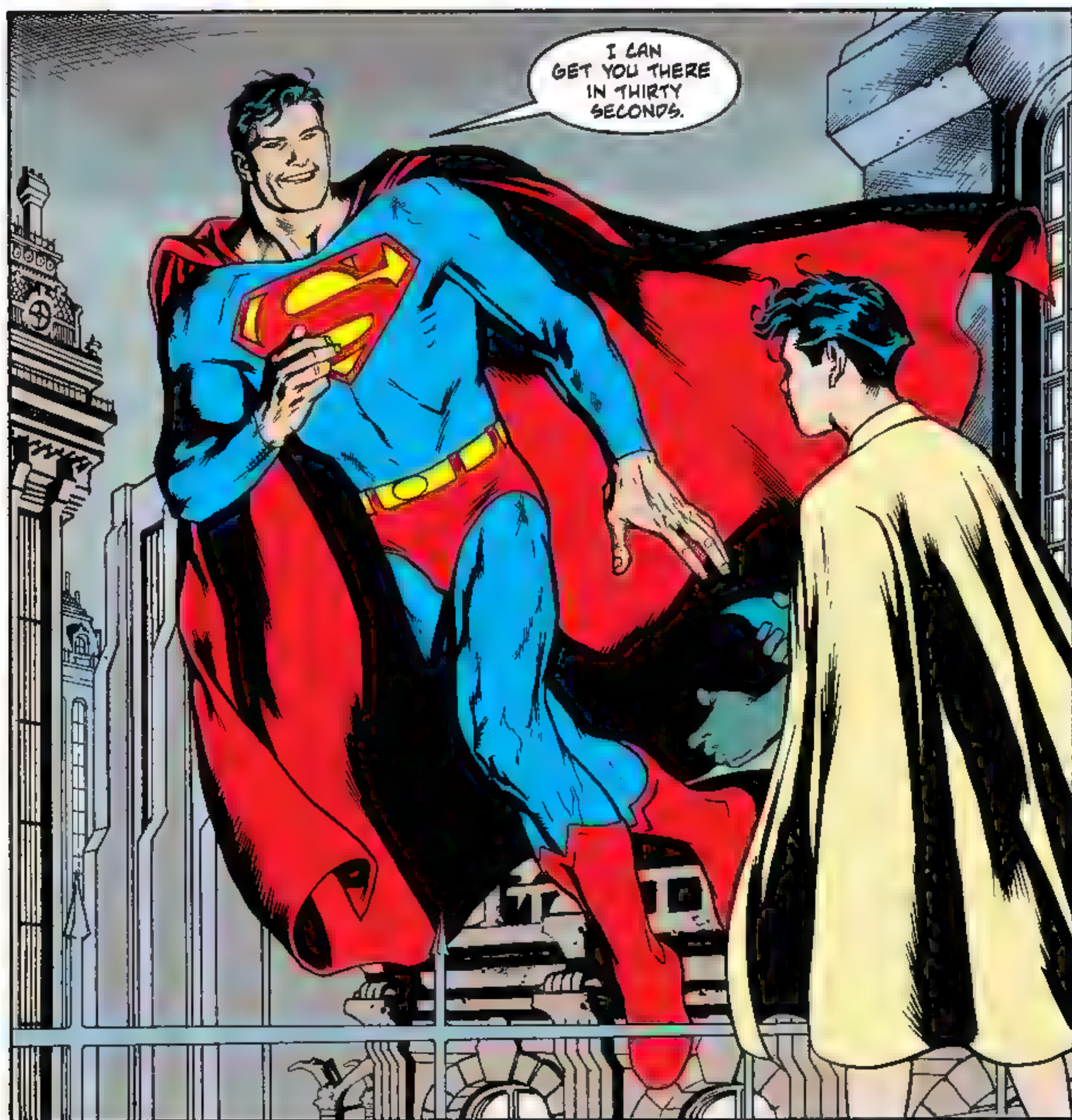


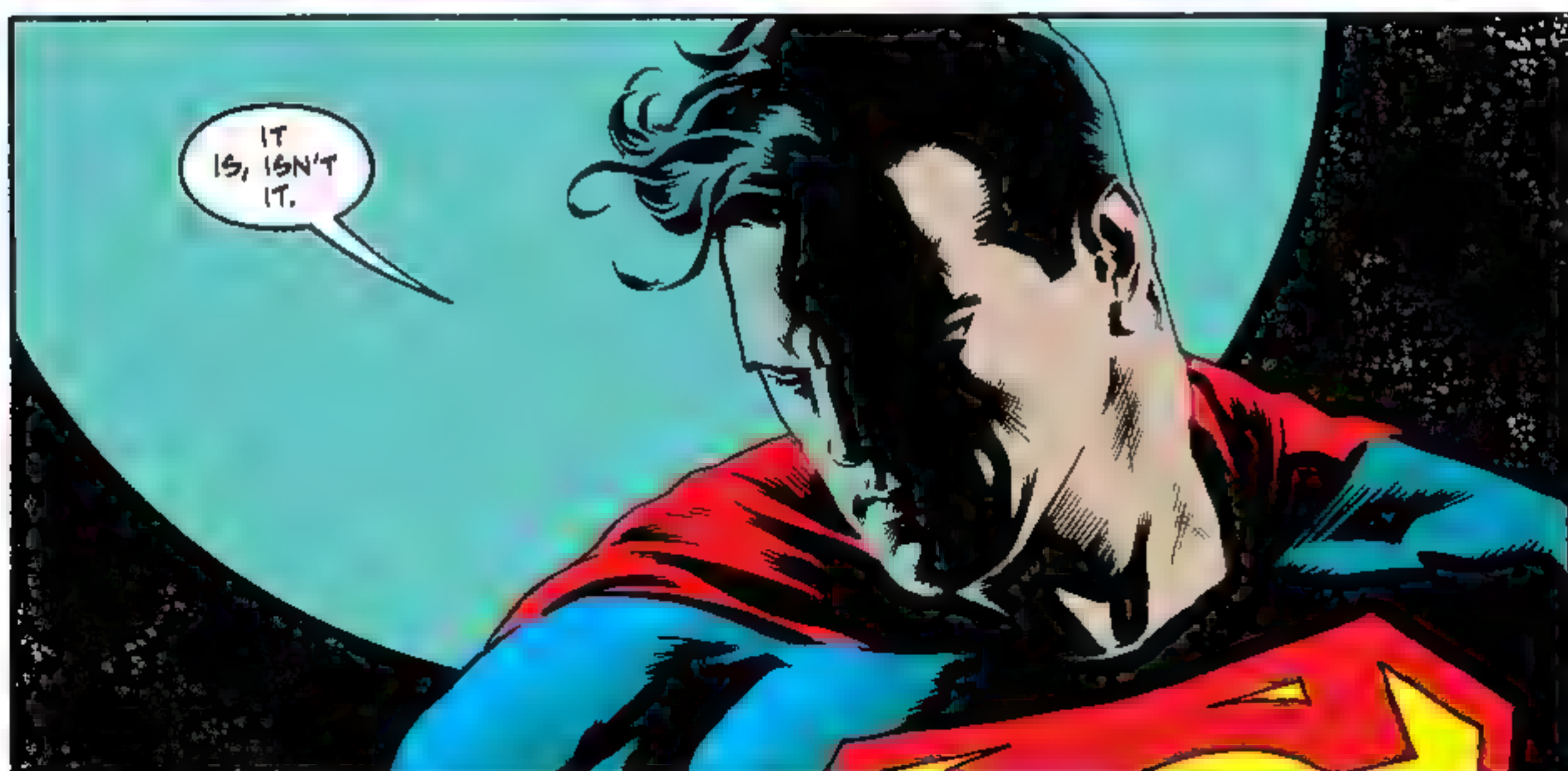
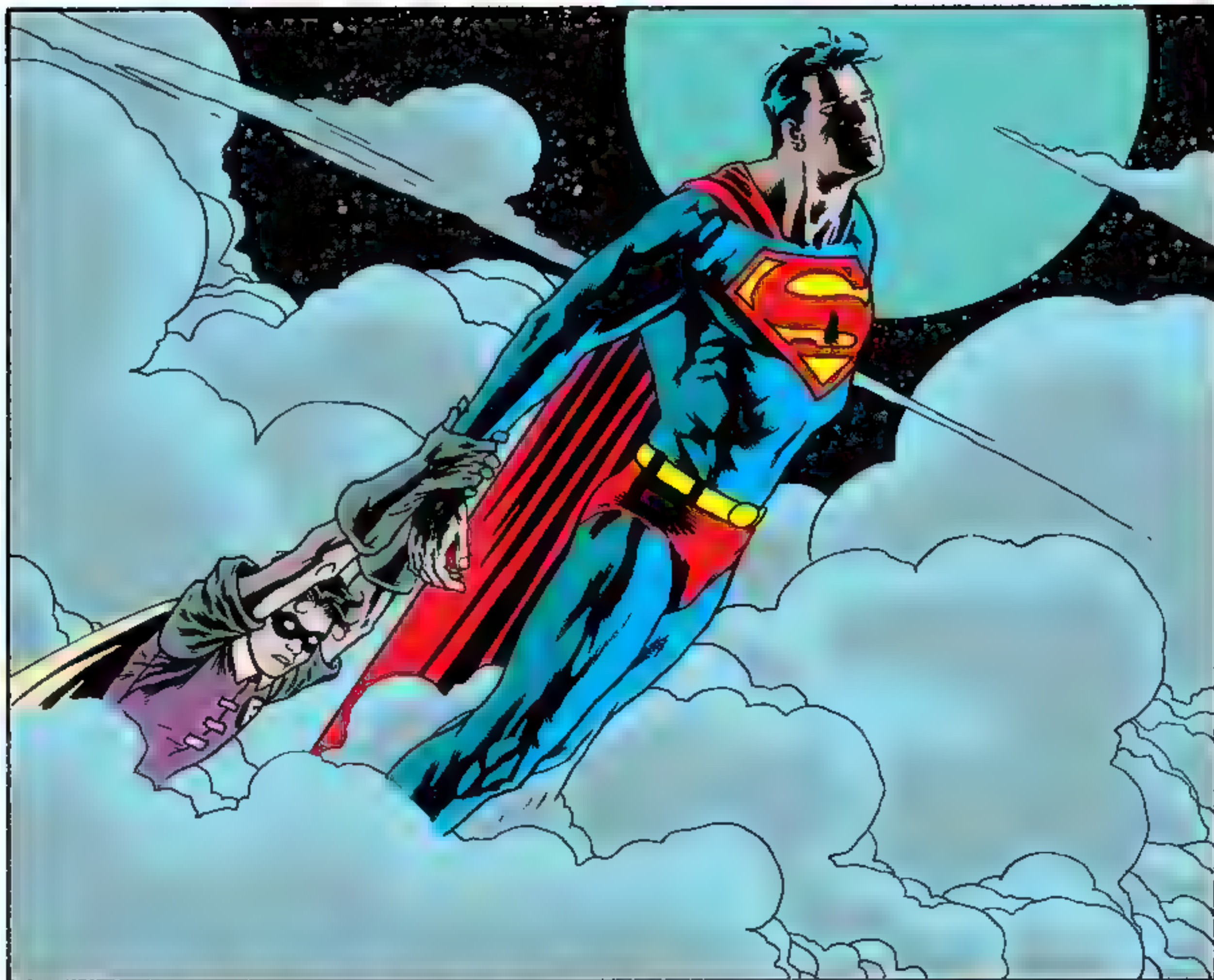
HELLO,
ROBIN.

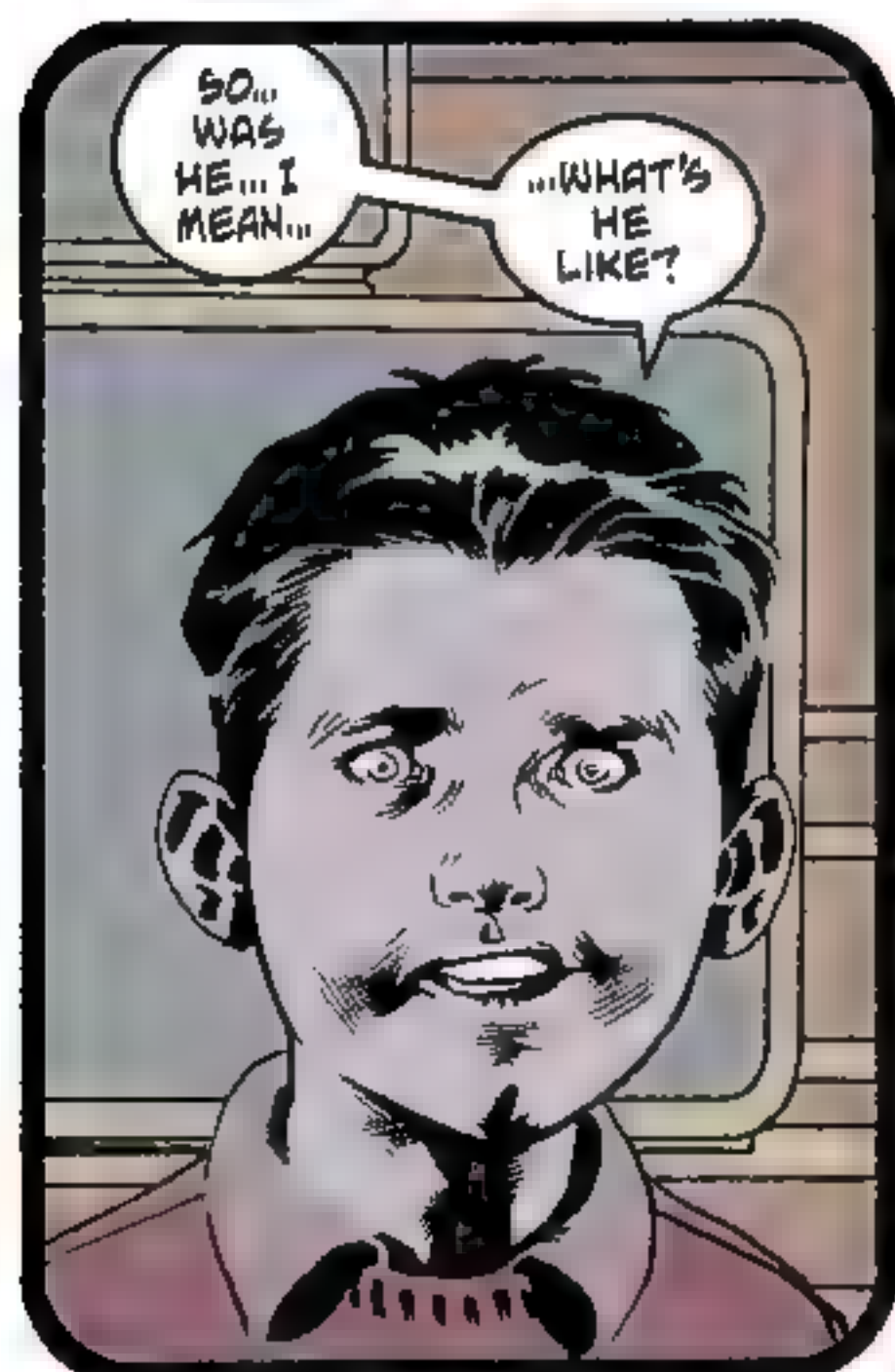
IT'S A
PLEASURE TO
FINALLY MEET
YOU.

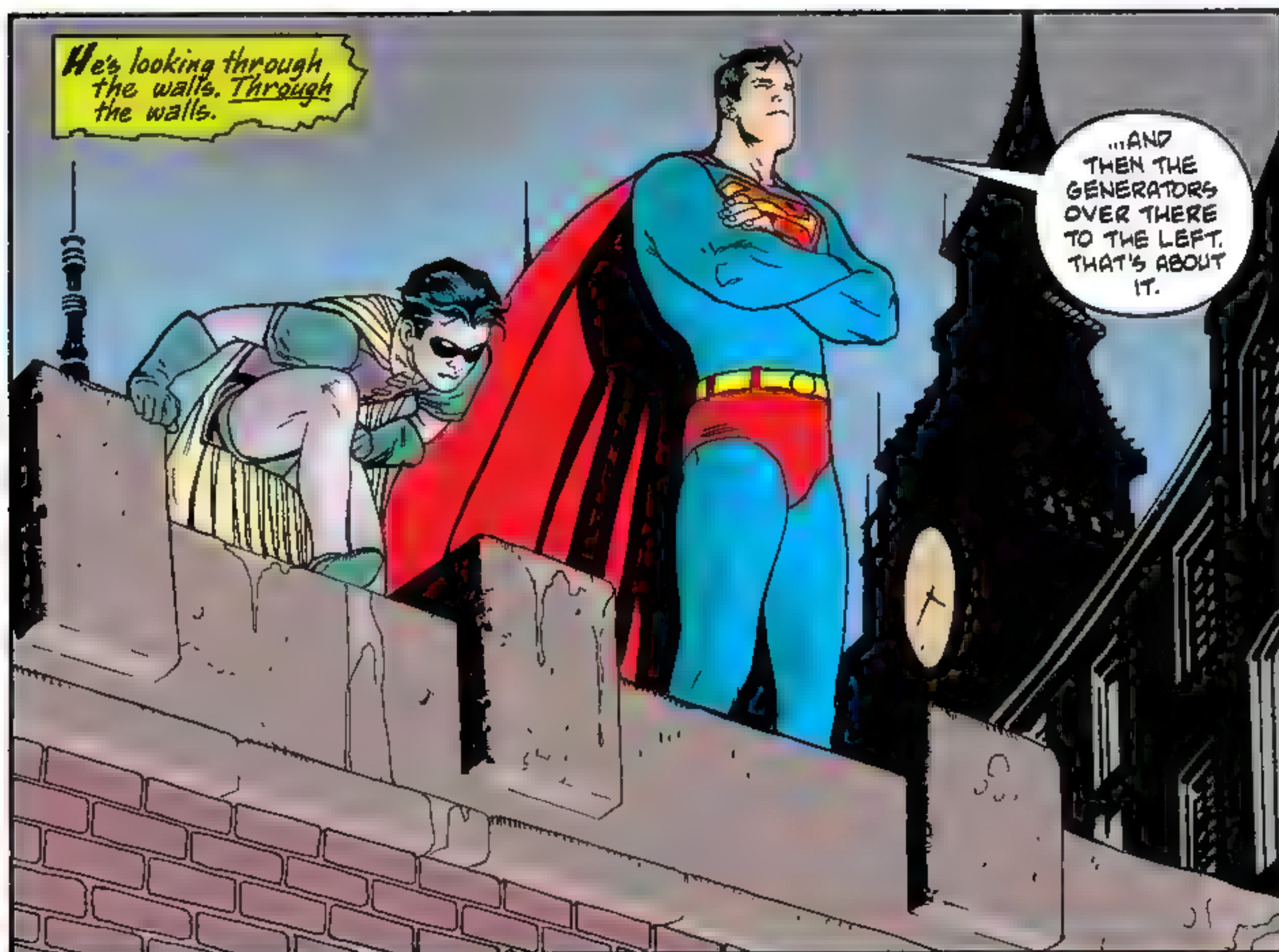


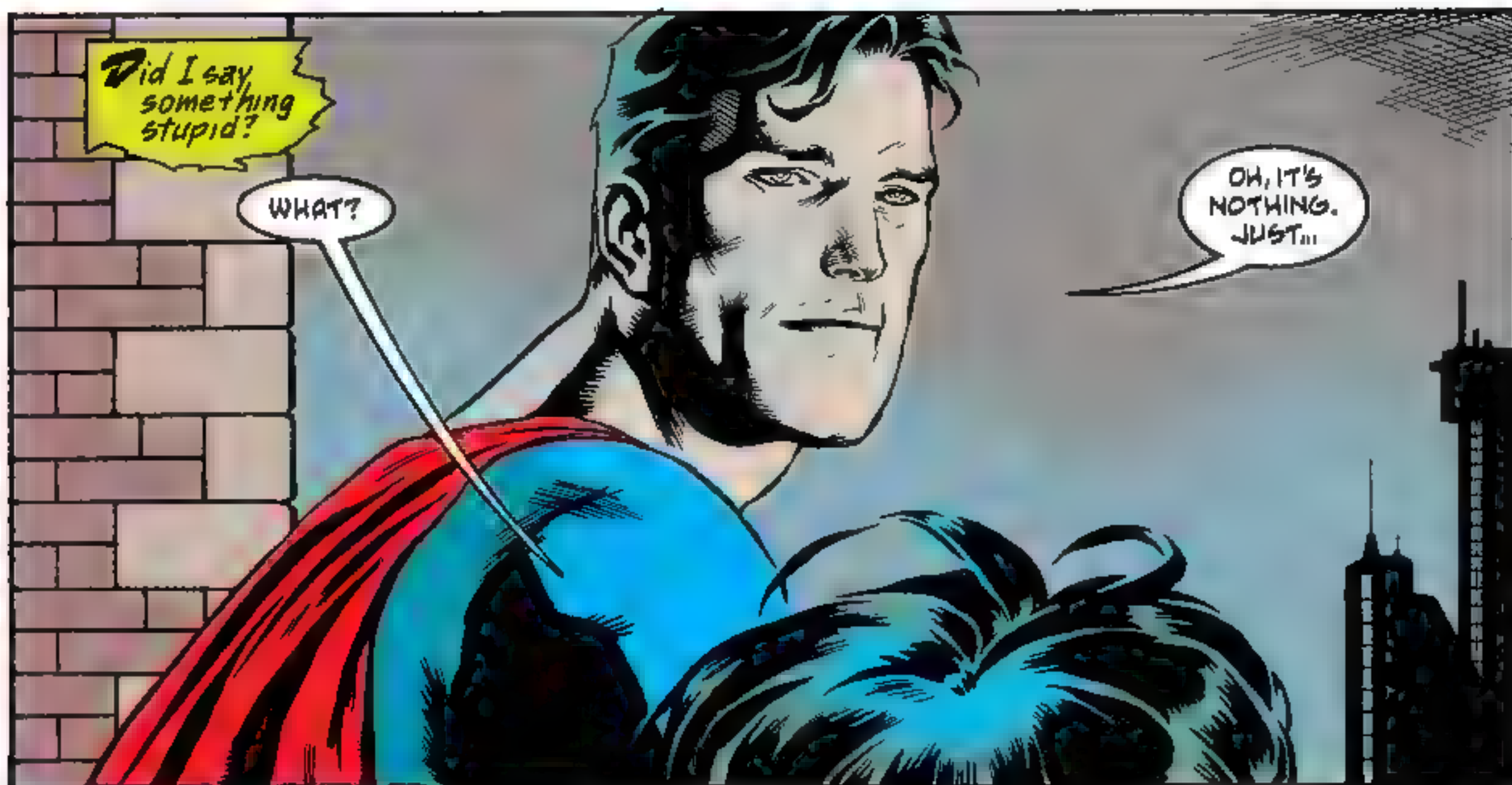


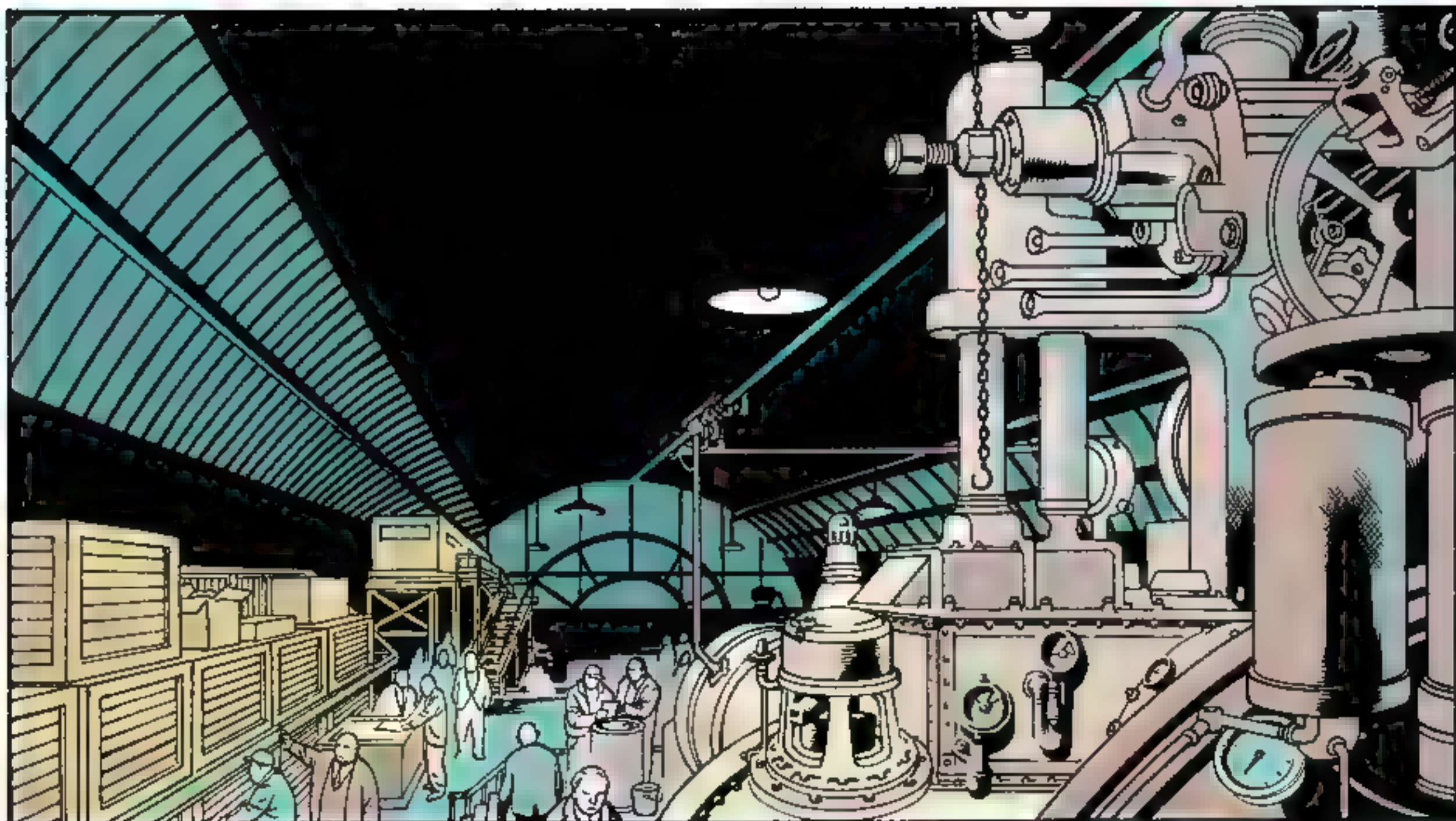


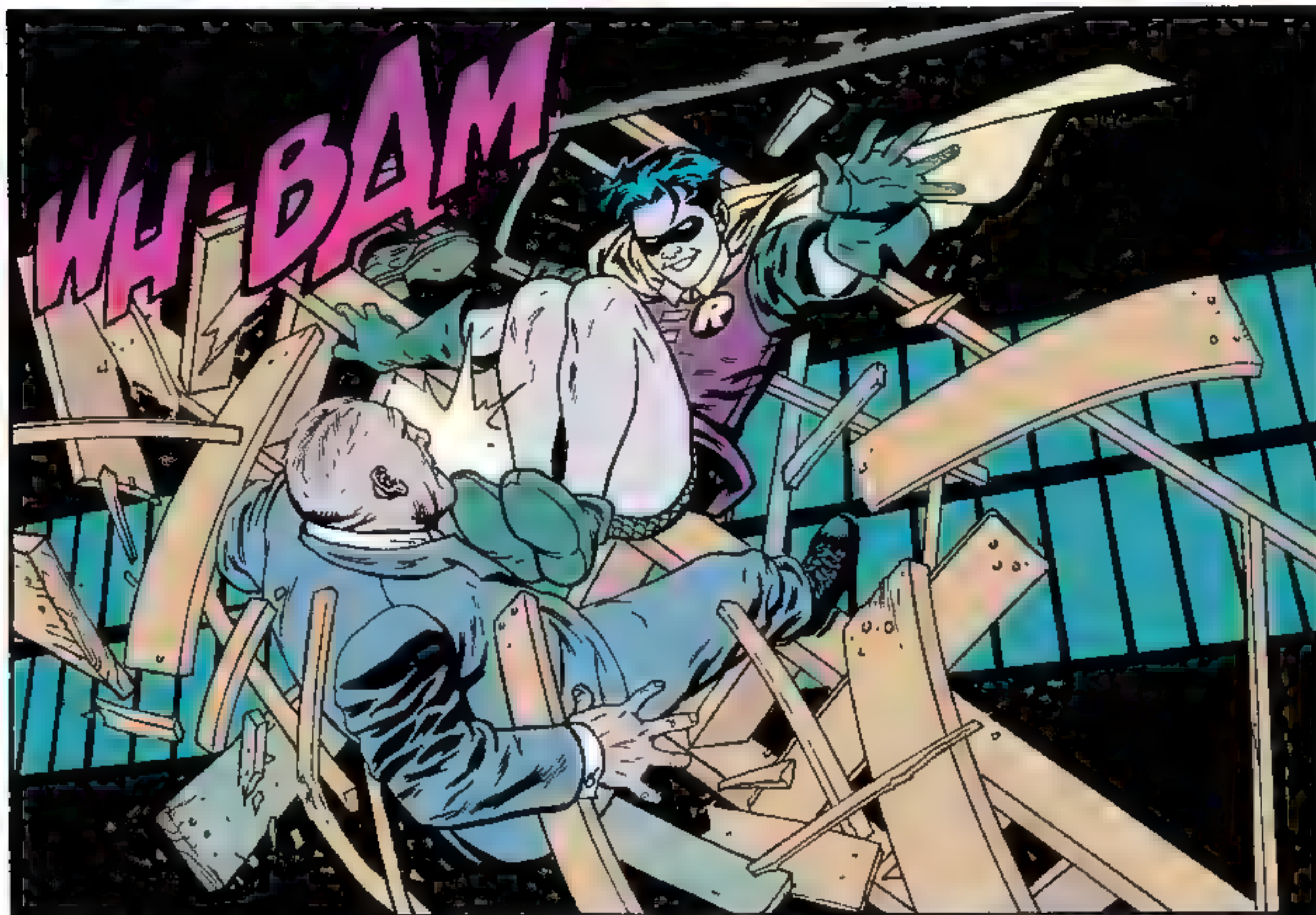
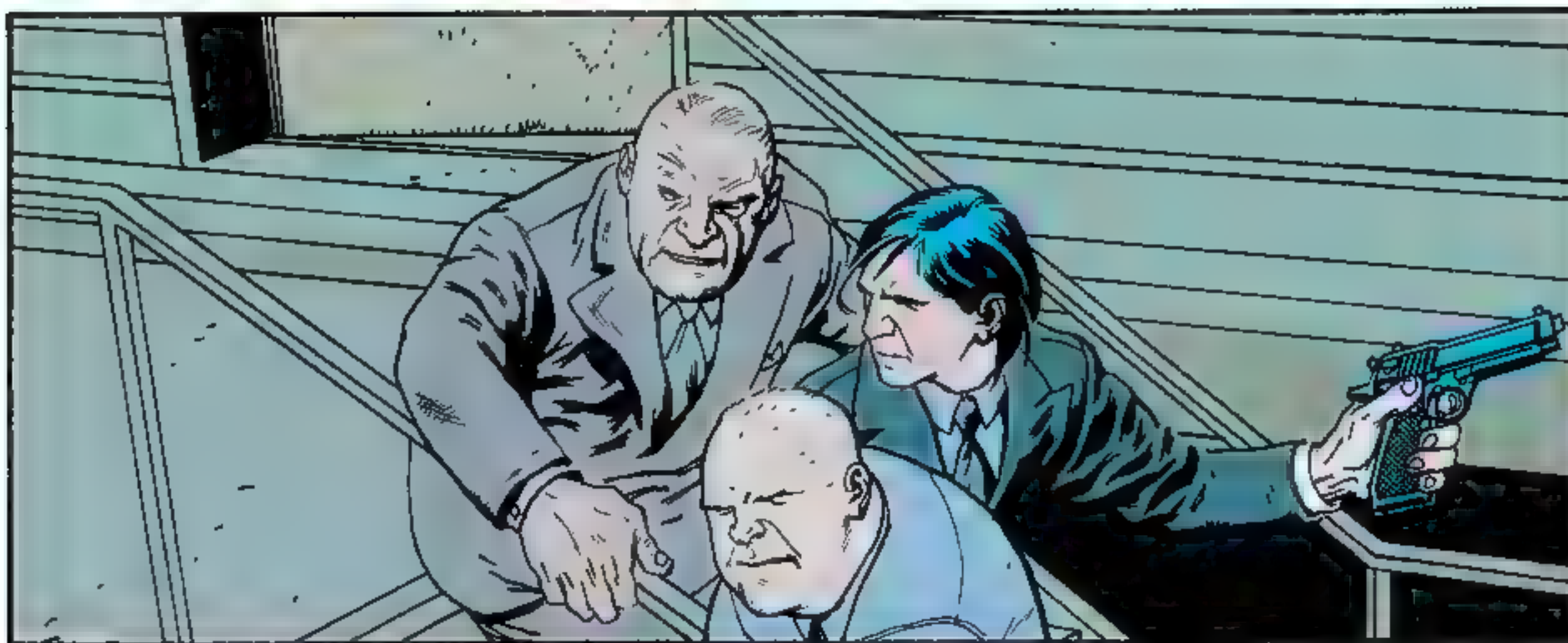
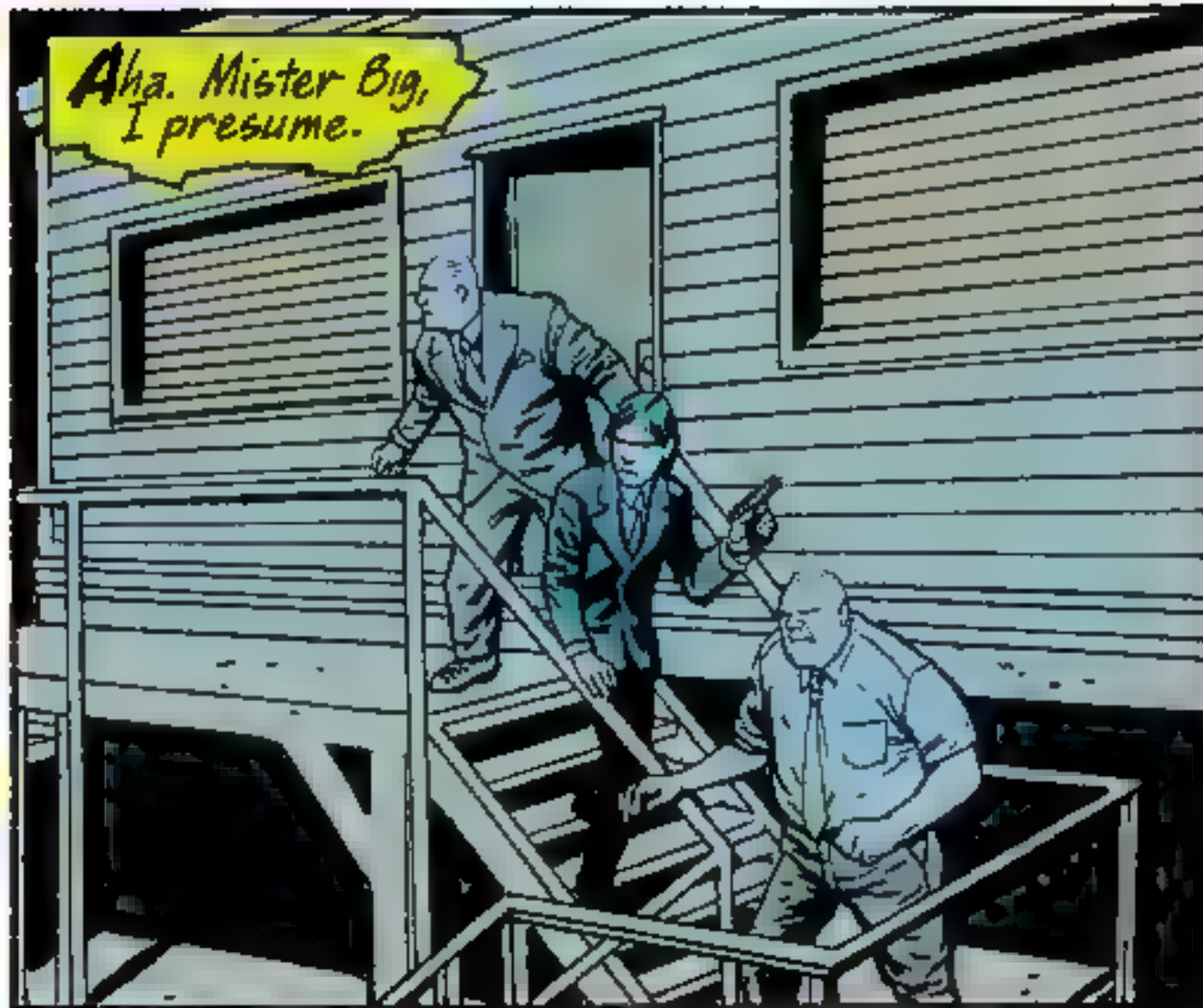
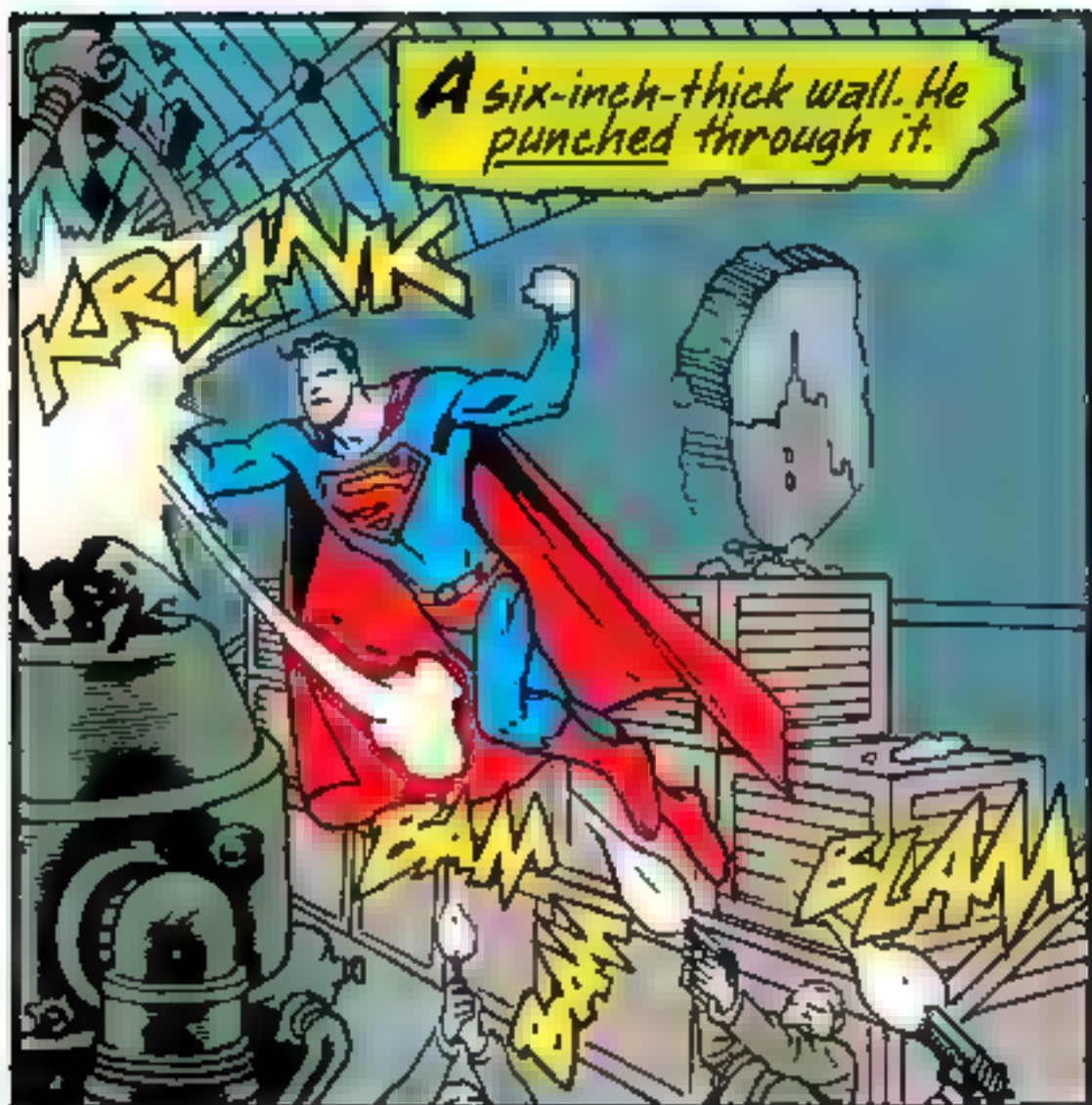


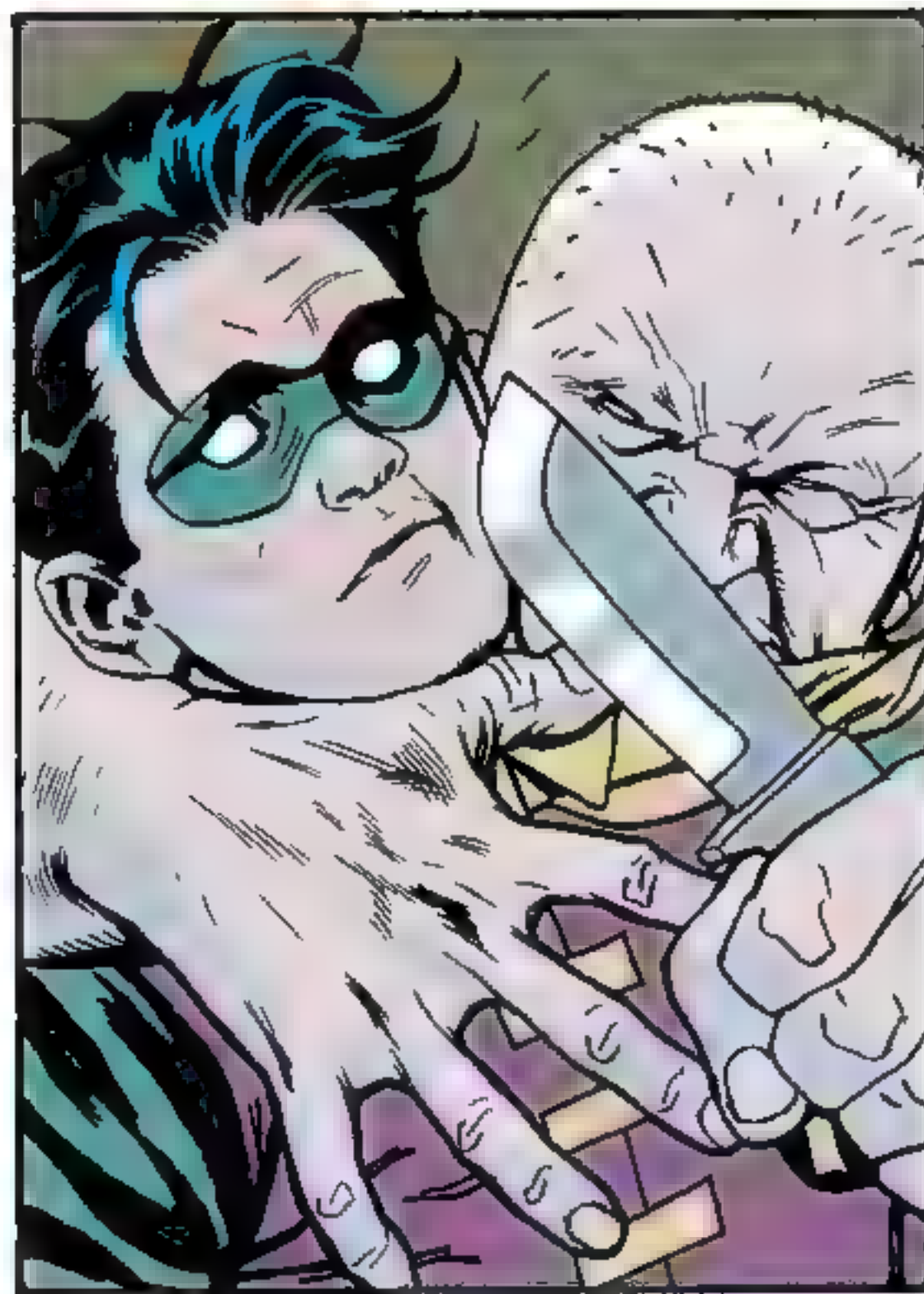


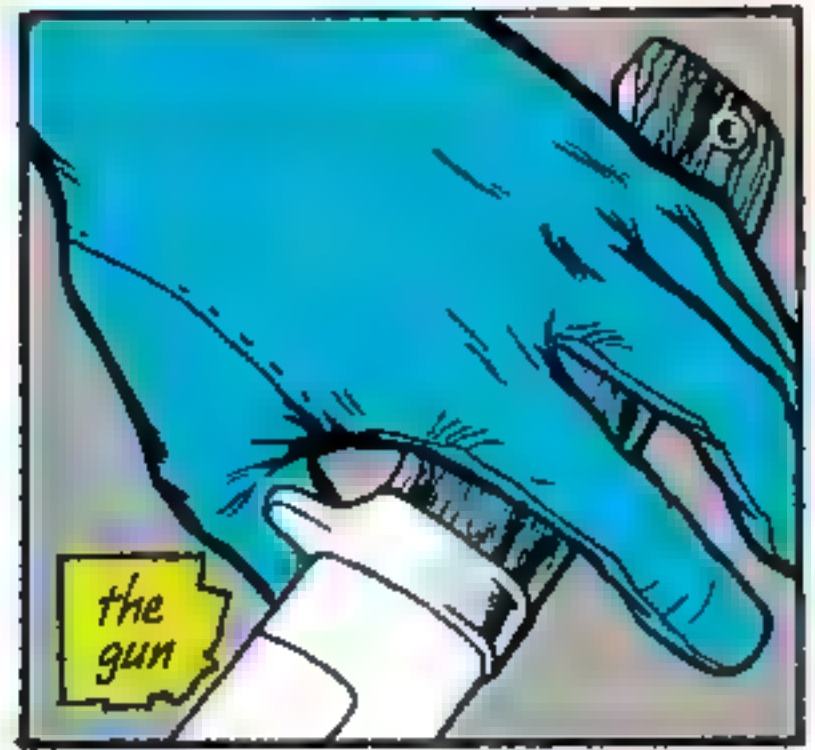
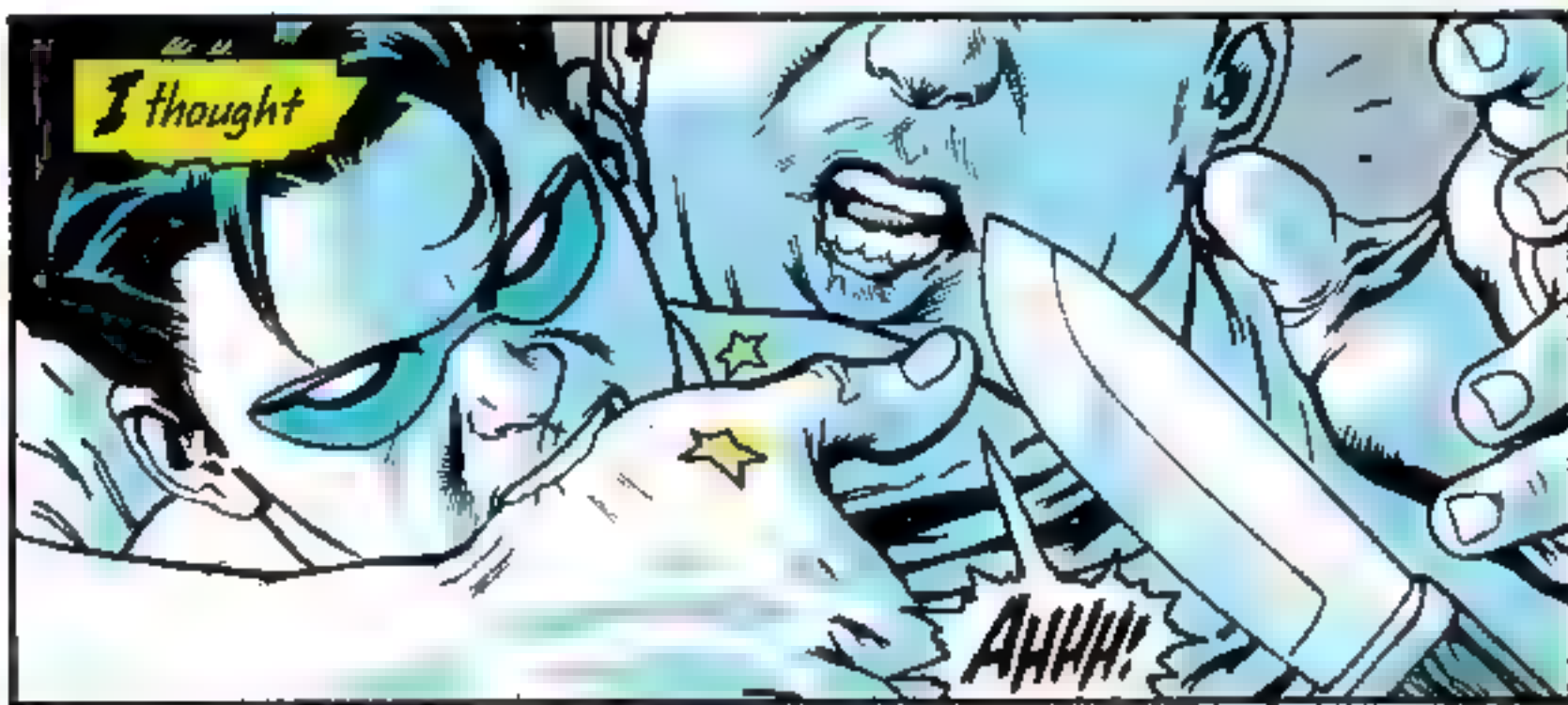


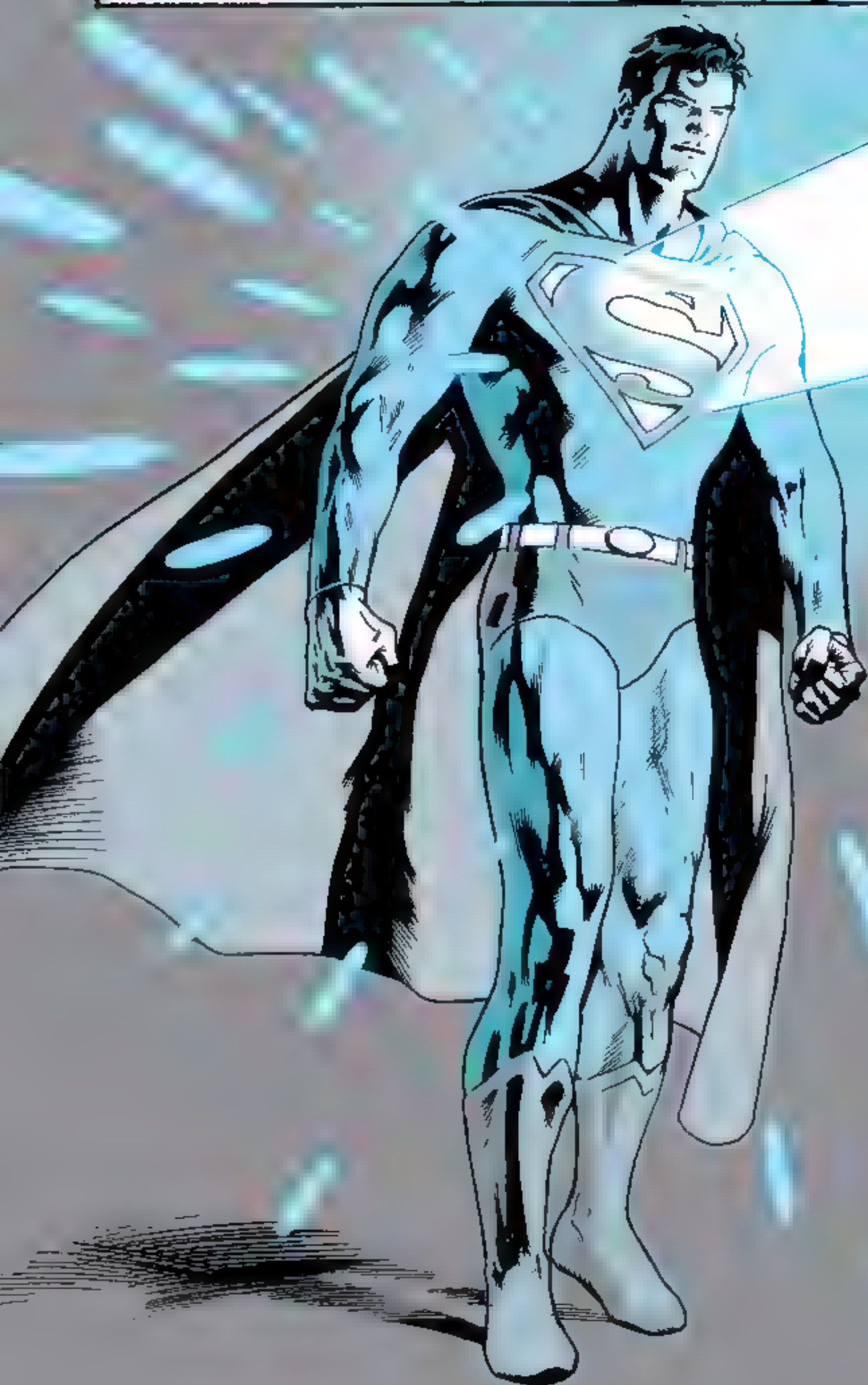


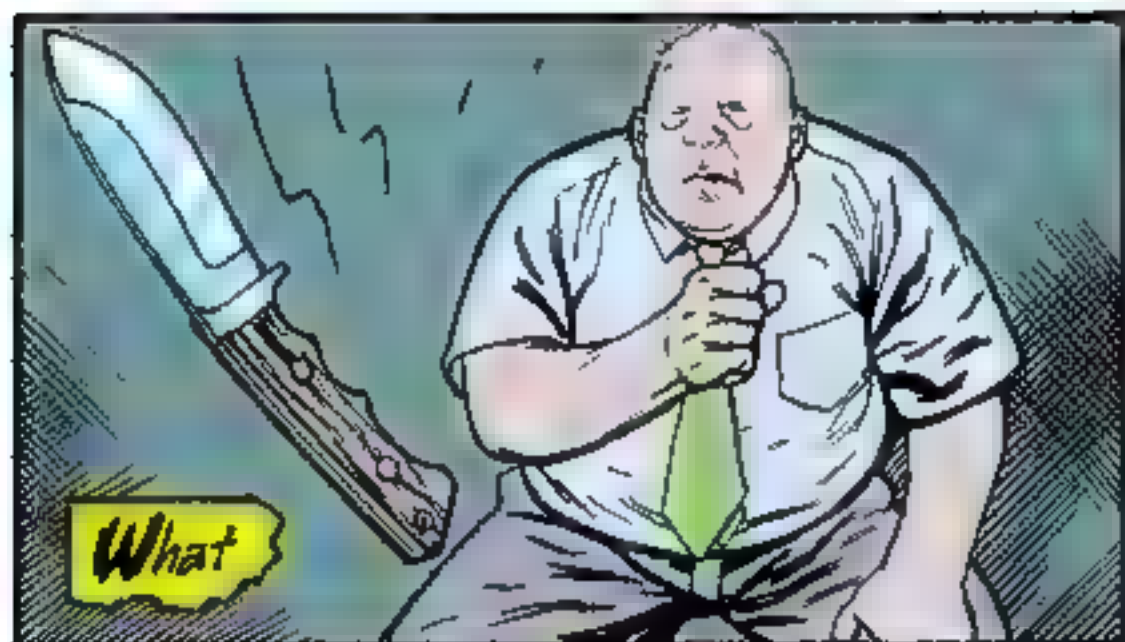
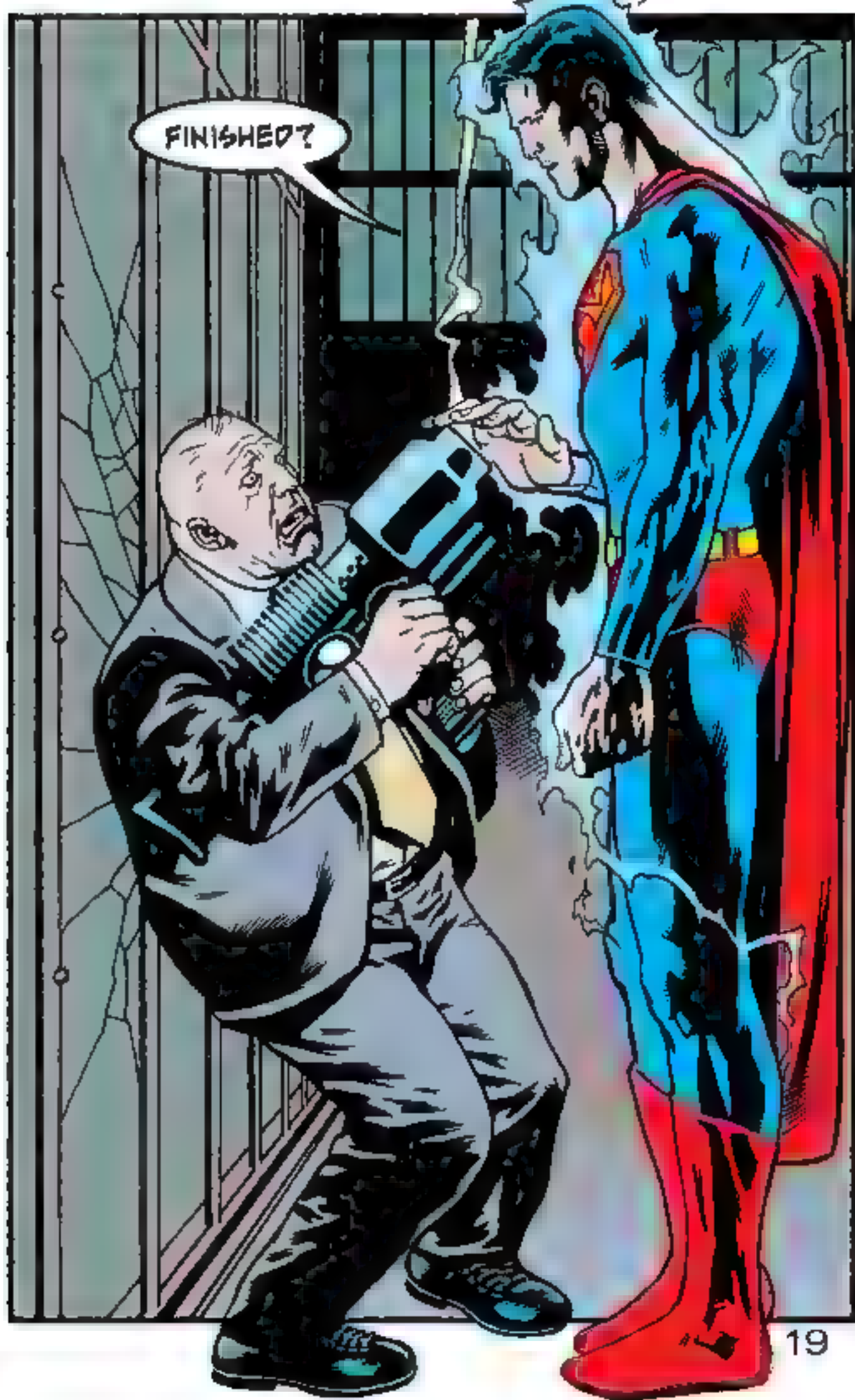


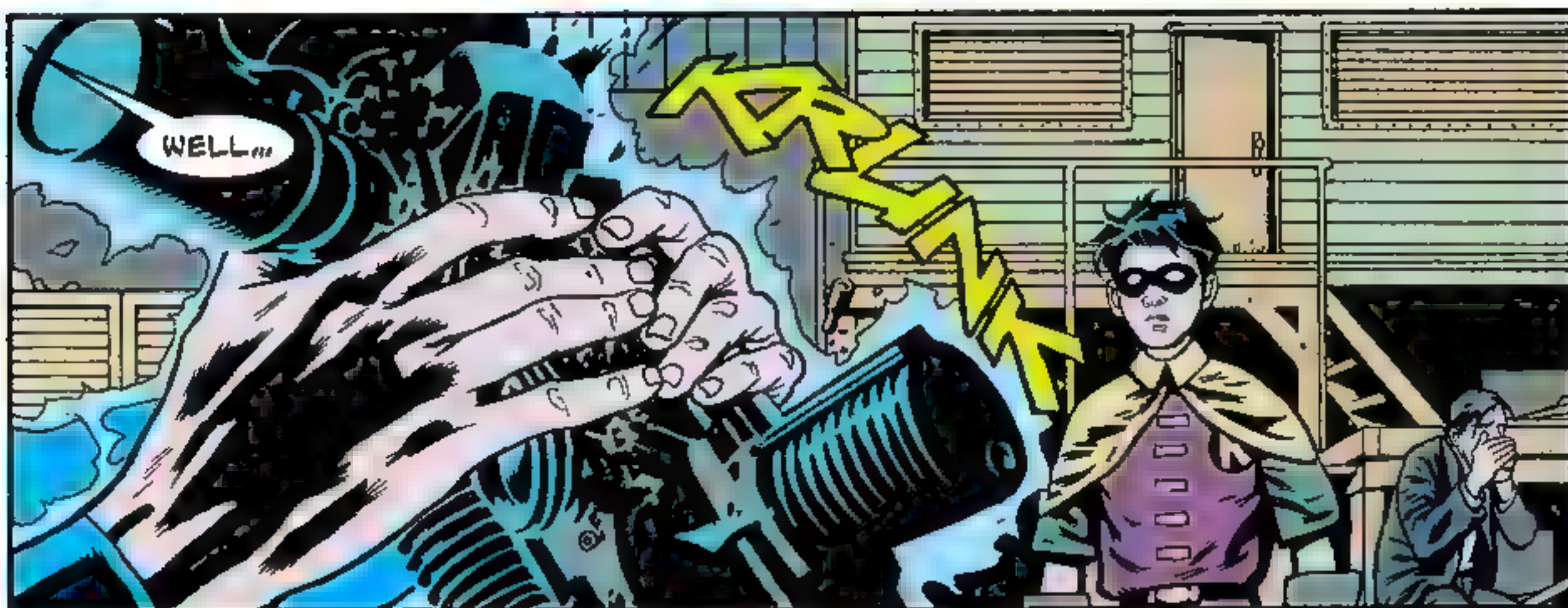
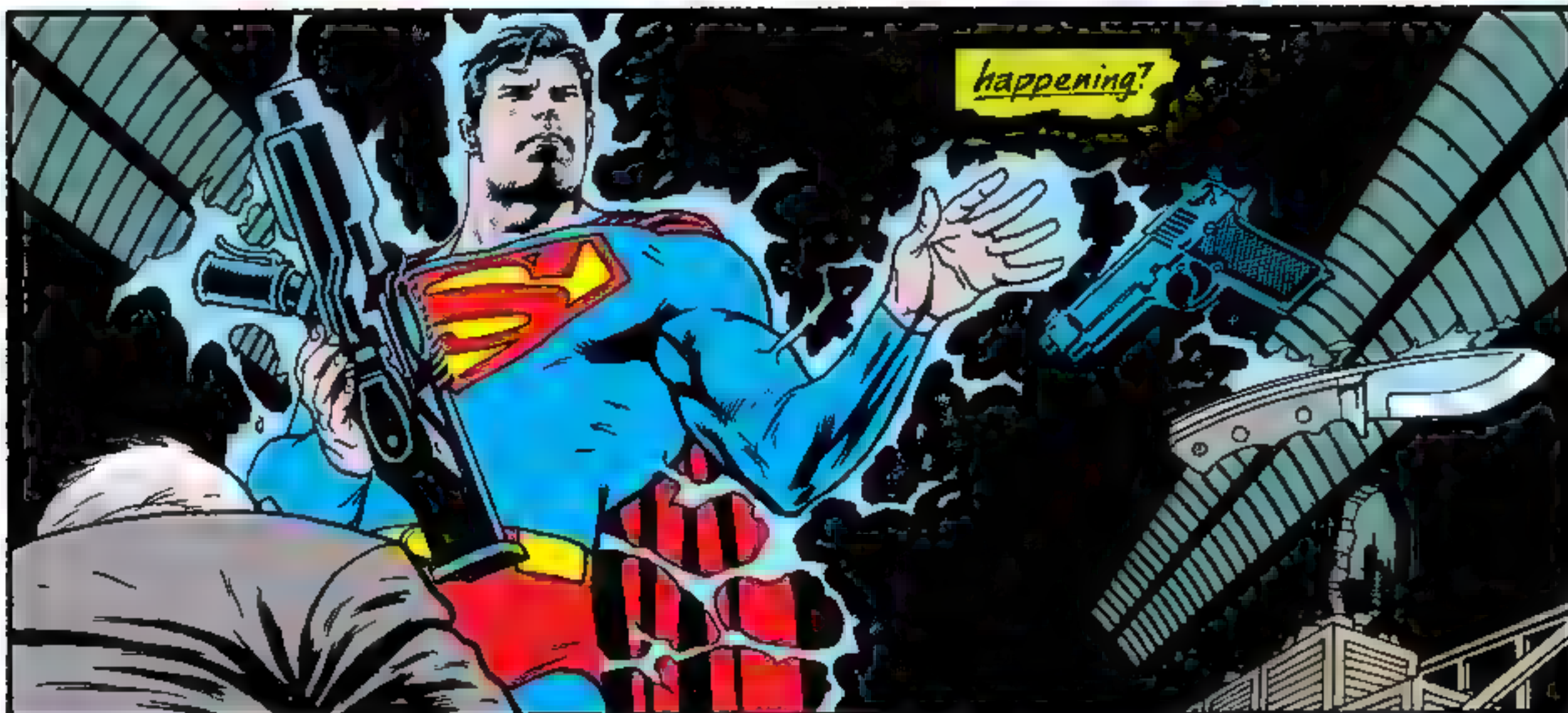


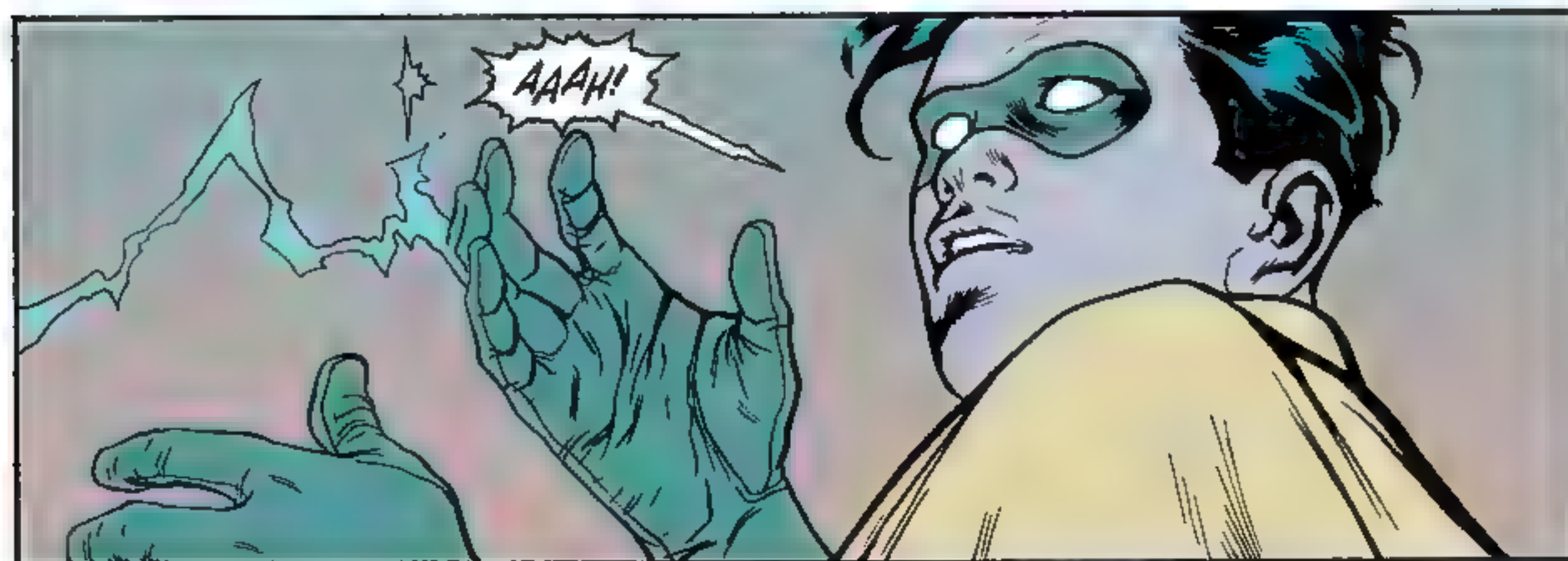
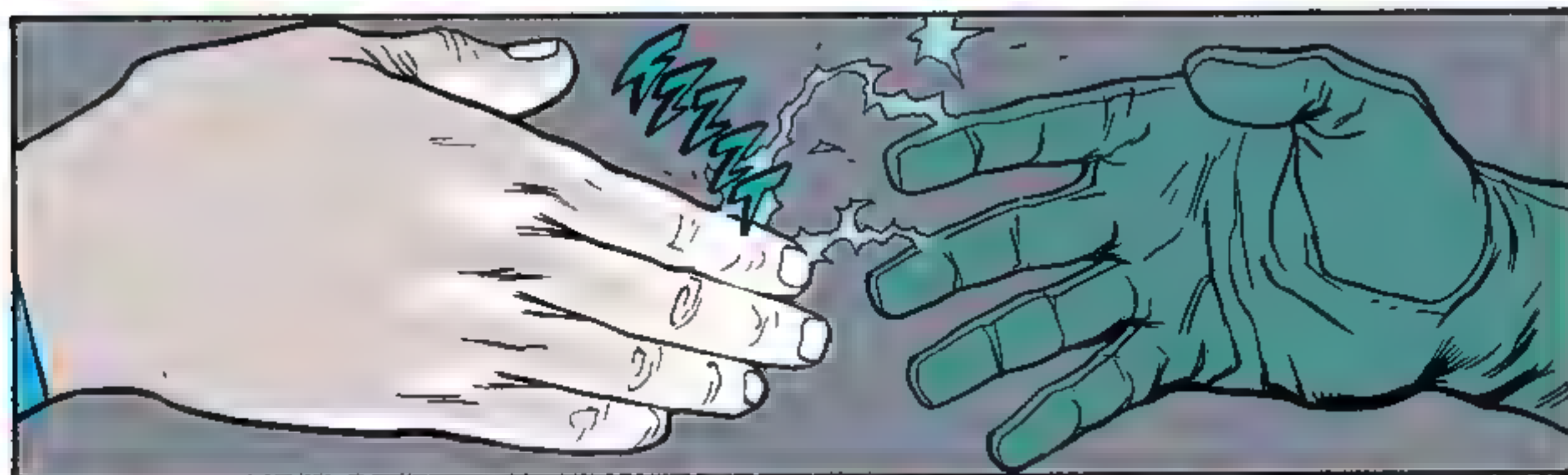
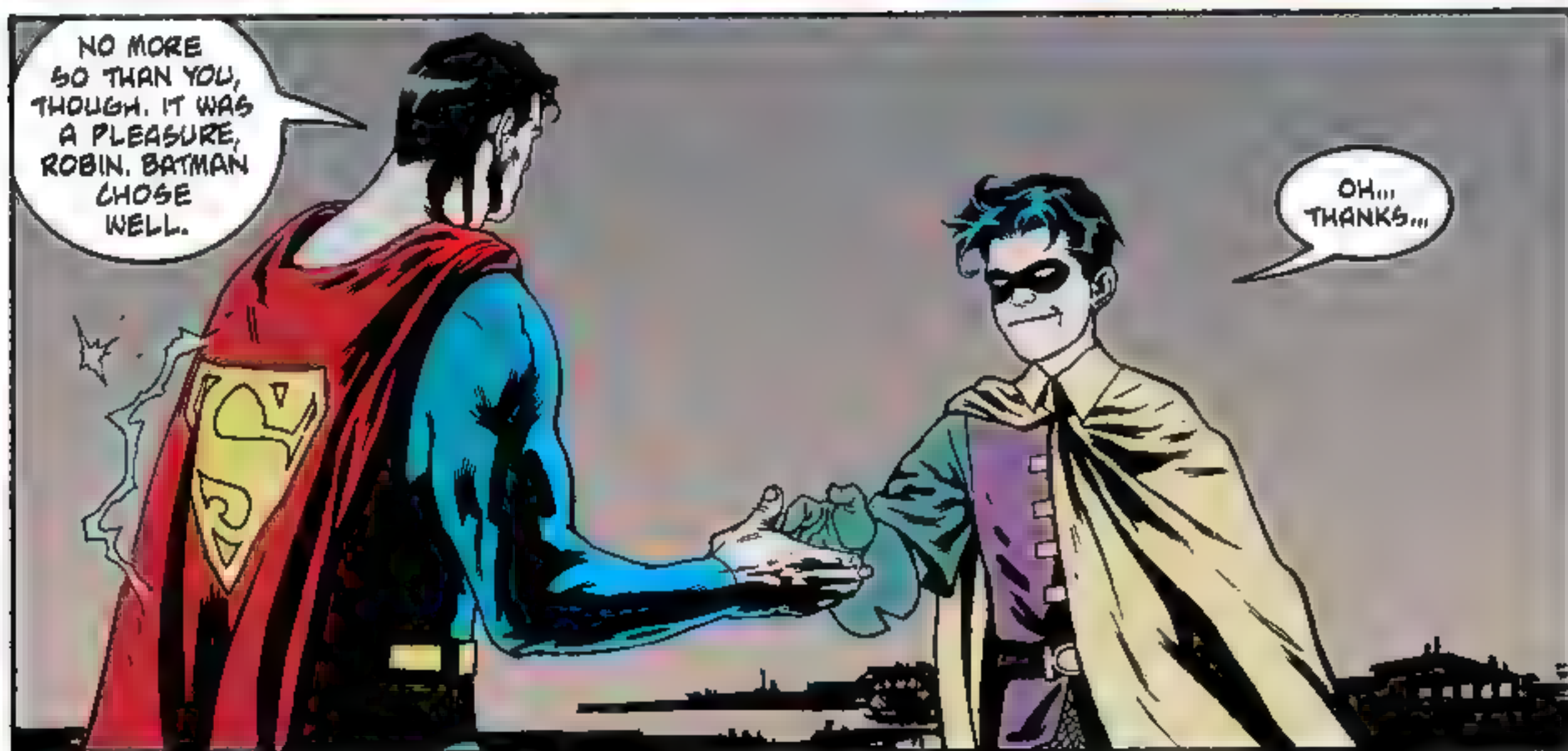
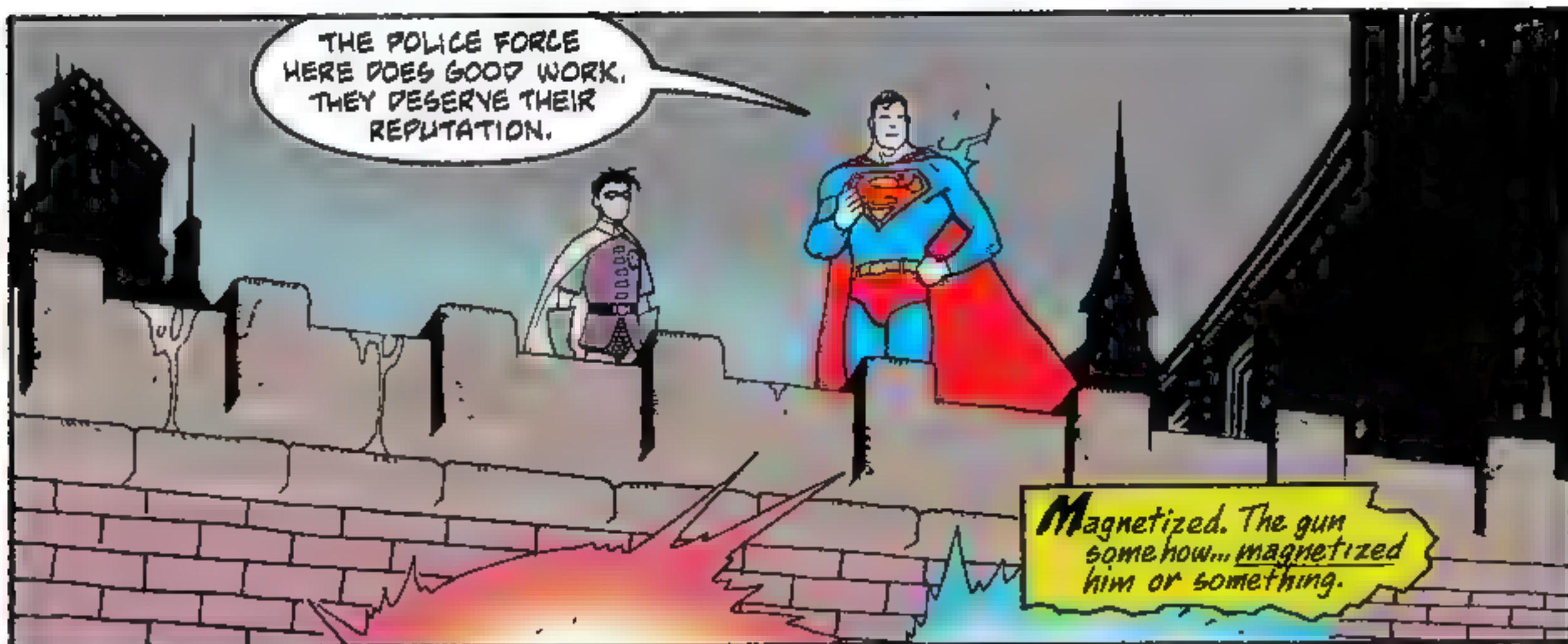


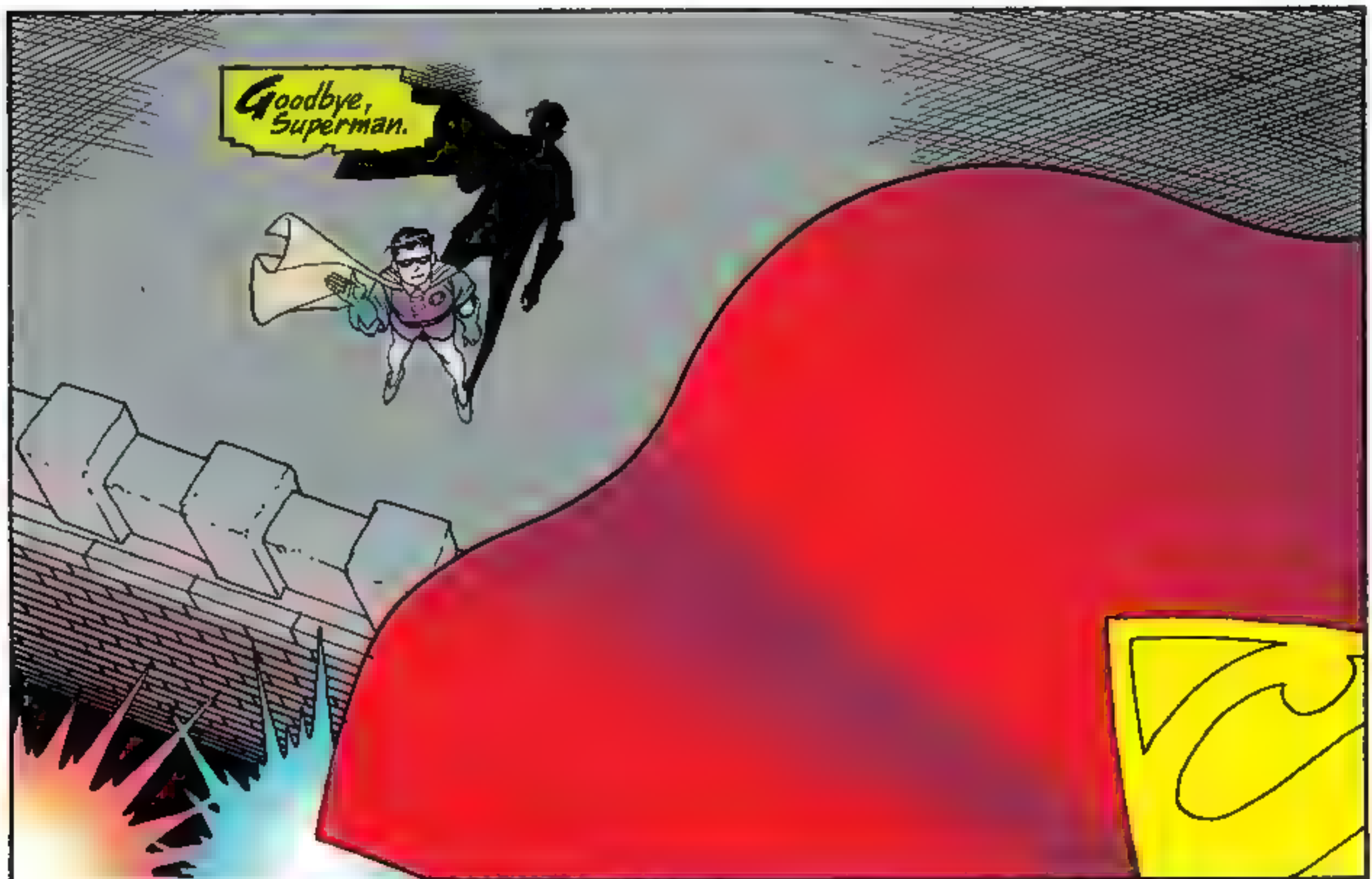




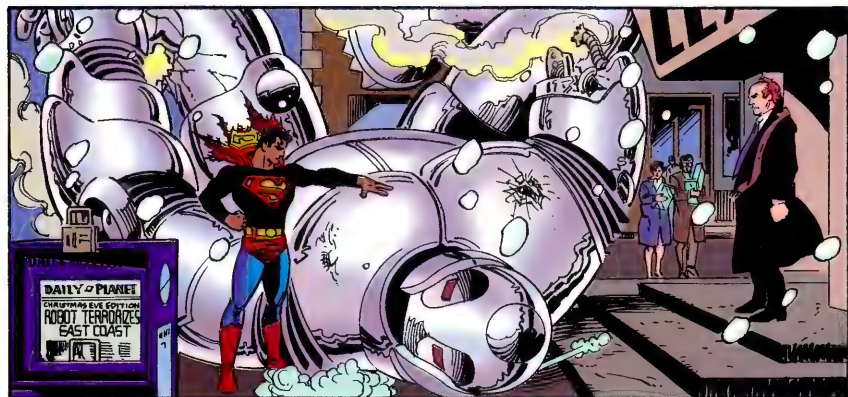
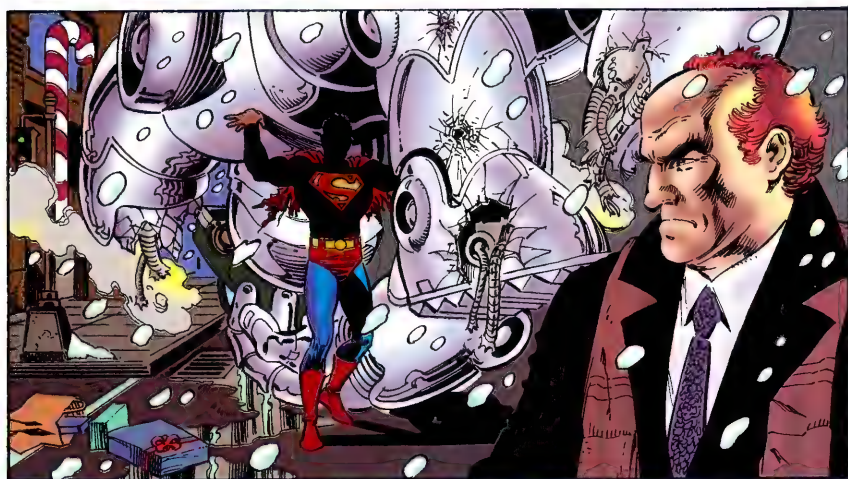
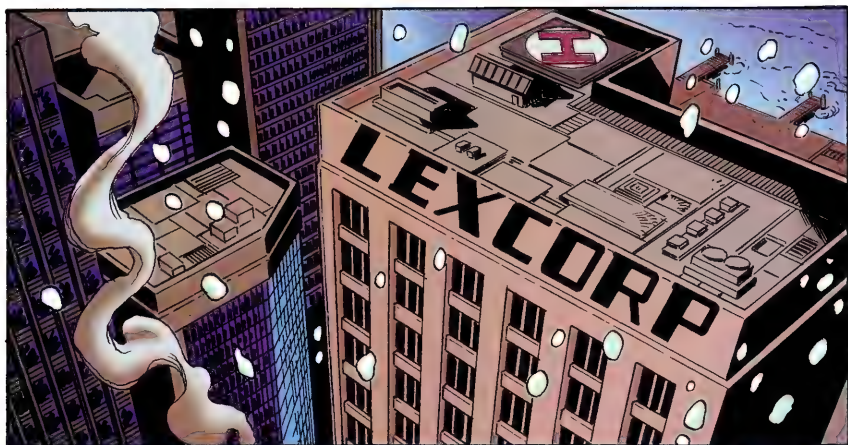


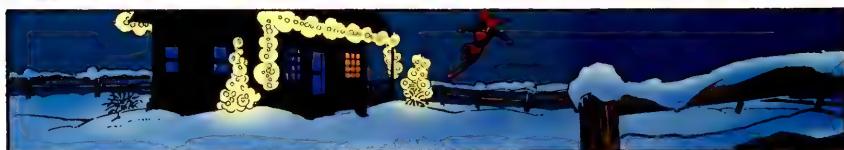
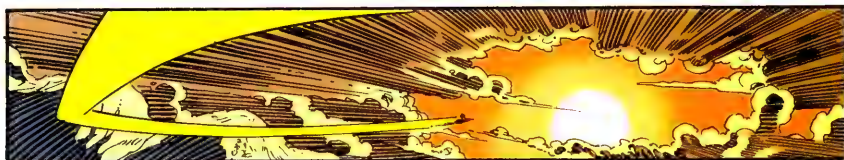
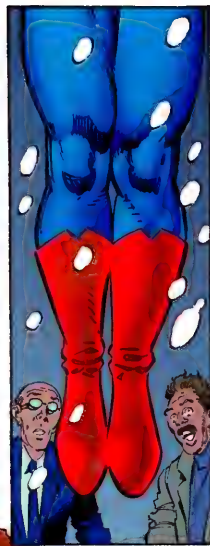
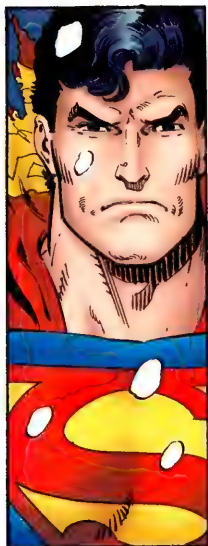


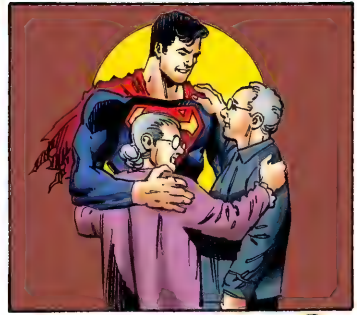
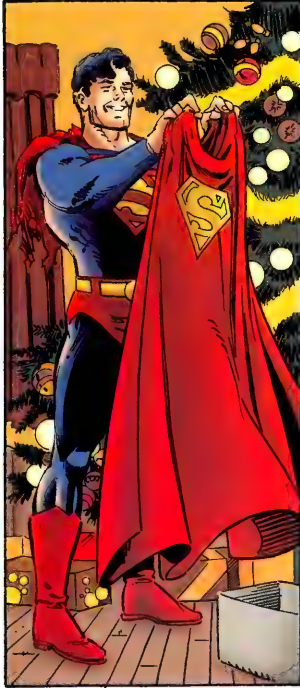
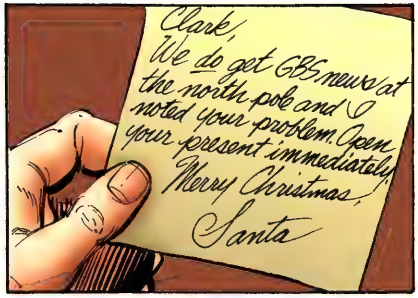




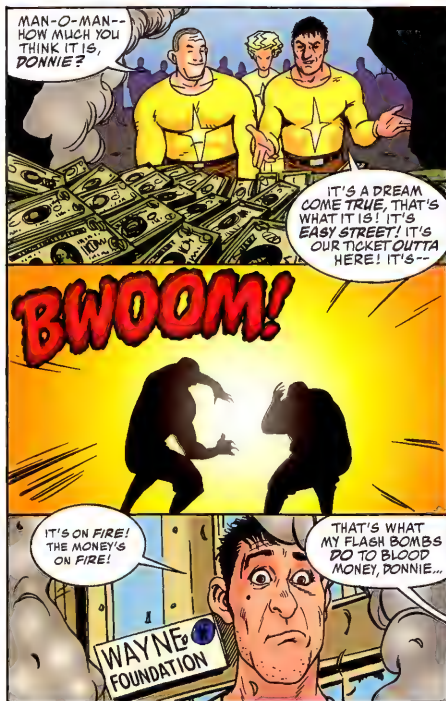
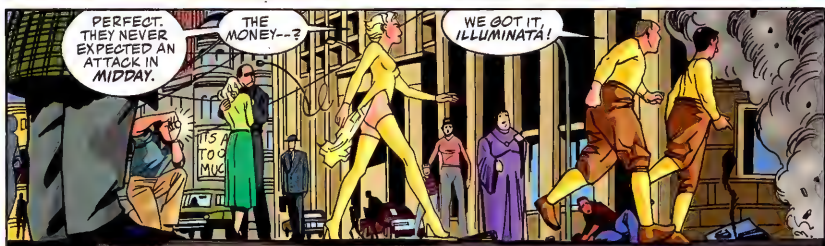
THE END







DAN JURGENS -writer/penciller
BRETT BREEDING -inker
JASON WRIGHT -colorist
JOHN COSTANZA -letterer



...THIS LOOKS
LIKE A JOB FOR

SUPERMAN!

**WORLD'S
FINEST:
YEAR
THREE**

**LIGHT
IN THE**

DARKNESS

KARL KESEL	DAVE TAYLOR	ROBERT CAMPANELLA	ALEX SINCLAIR	BILL OAKLEY	JOSEPH ILLIDGE	DARREN VINCENZO
words	pencils	inks	colors/seps	letters	assoc. ed.	editor

BATMAN created by BOB KANE • SUPERMAN created by SIEGEL & SHUSTER

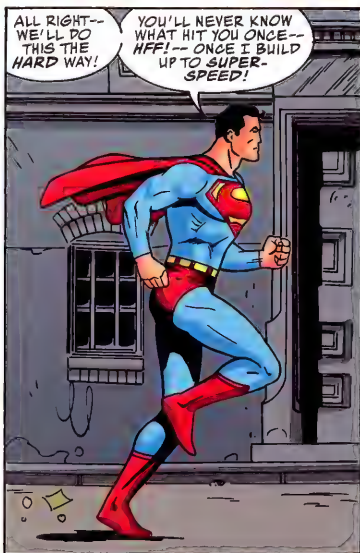
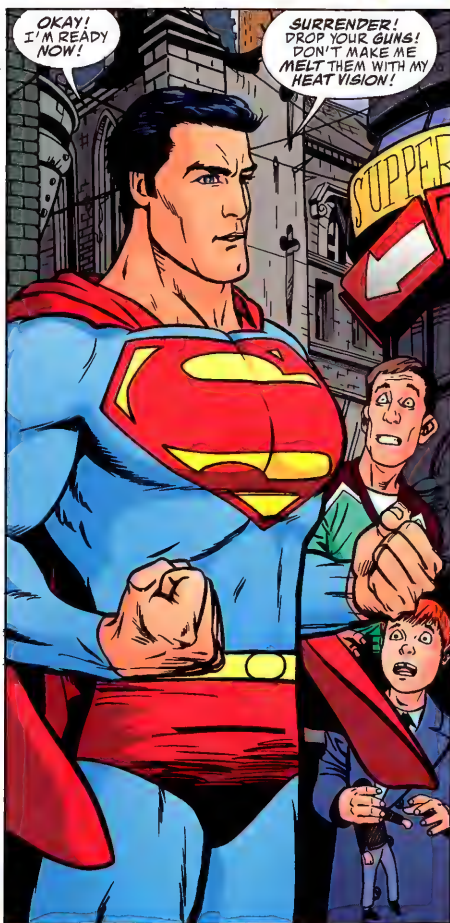
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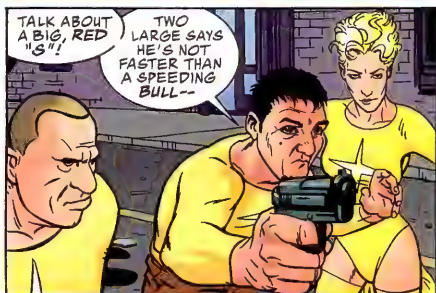
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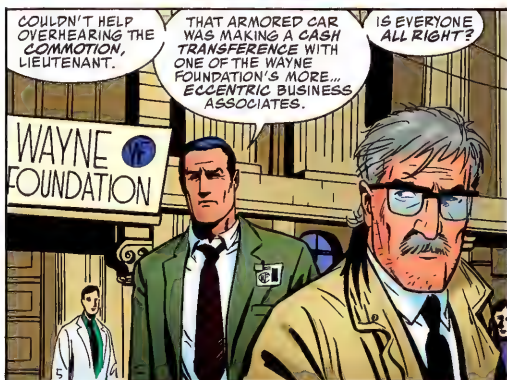
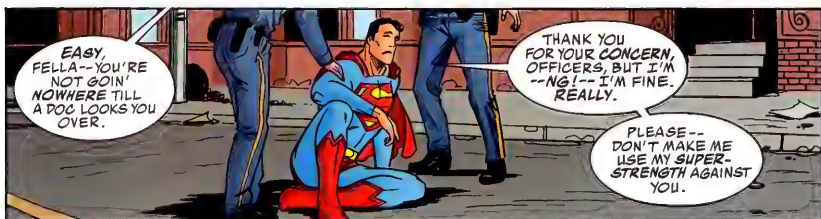
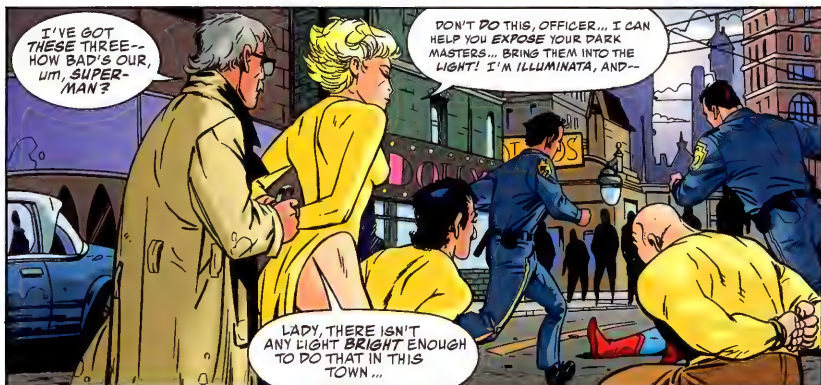


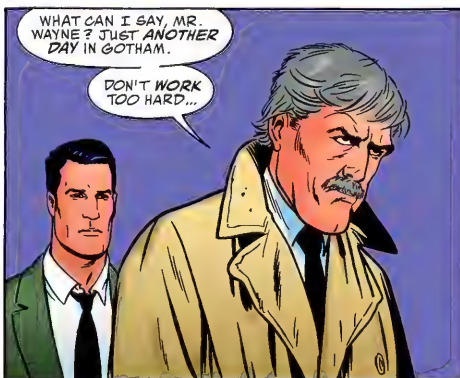
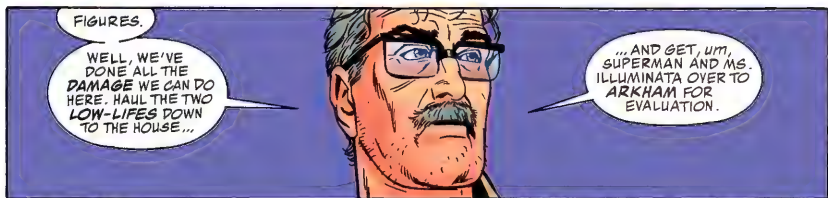
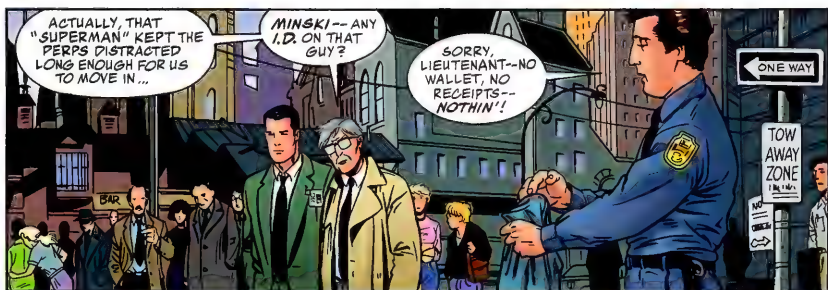
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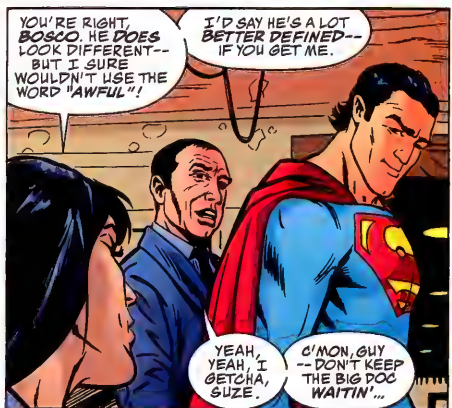
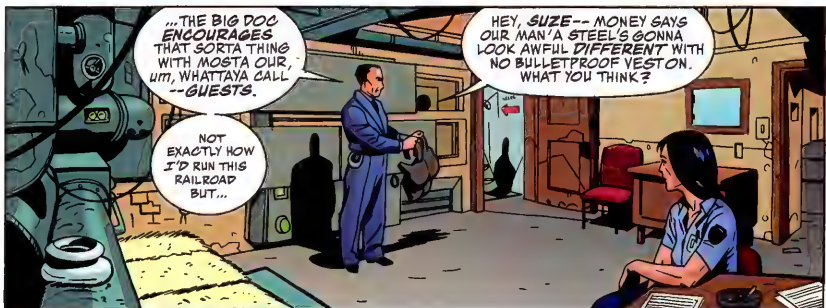
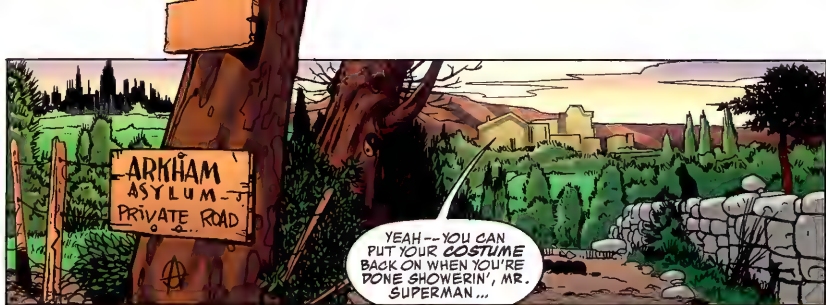
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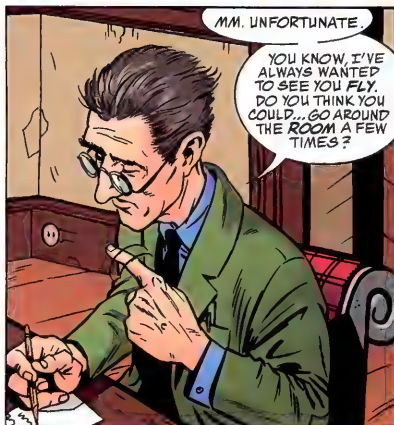
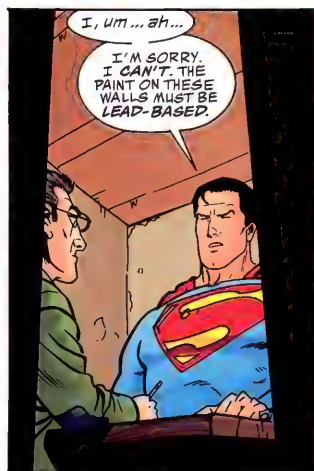
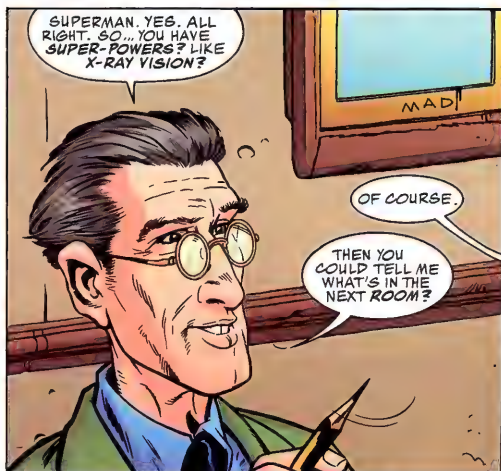


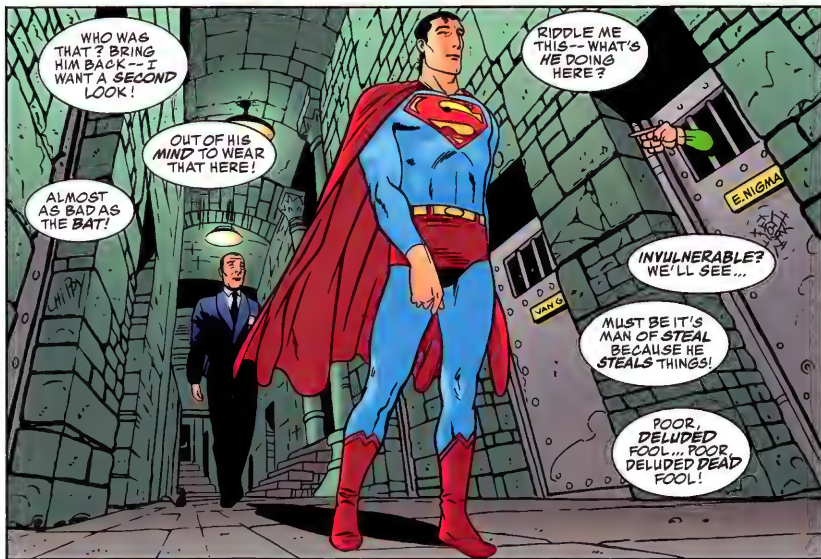


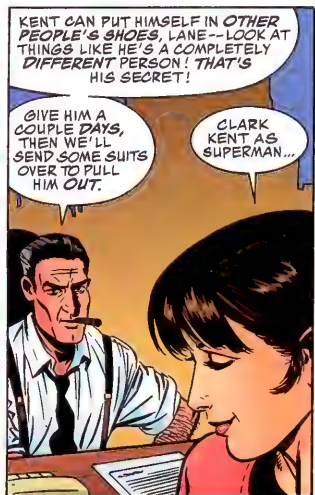
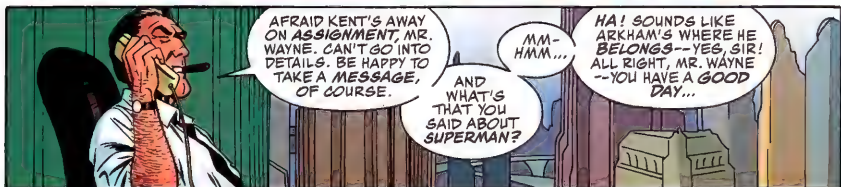
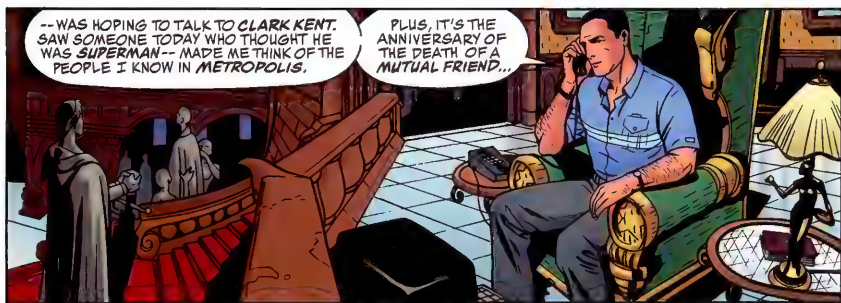






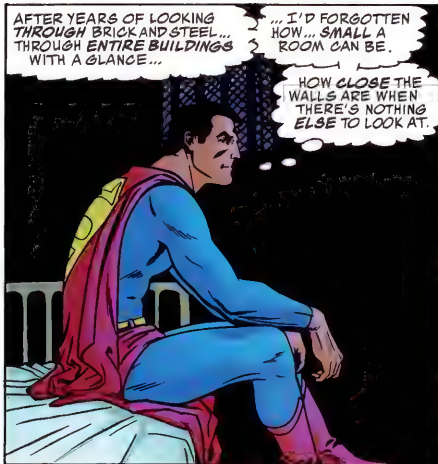








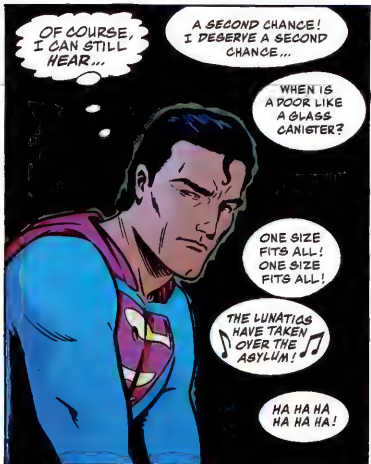
THE UNNERVING THING IS-- MY X-RAY VISION REALLY CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE LAYERS OF LEAD PAINT ON THESE WALLS.



AFTER YEARS OF LOOKING THROUGH BRICK AND STEEL... THROUGH ENTIRE BUILDINGS WITH A GLANCE...

... I'D FORGOTTEN HOW... SMALL A ROOM CAN BE.

HOW CLOSE THE WALLS ARE WHEN THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO LOOK AT.



OF COURSE, I CAN STILL HEAR...

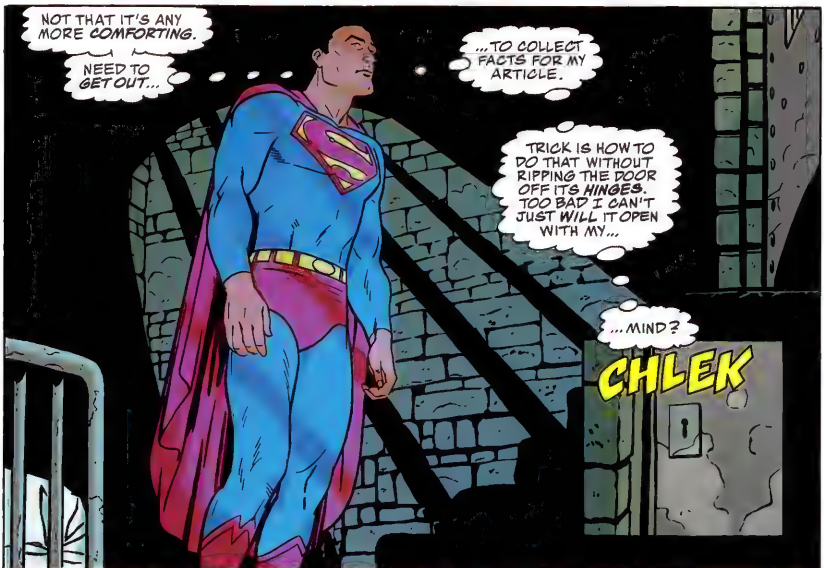
A SECOND CHANCE! I DESERVE A SECOND CHANCE...

WHEN IS A POOR LIKE A GLASS CANISTER?

ONE SIZE FITS ALL! ONE SIZE FITS ALL!

THE LUNATICS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ASYLUM!

HA HA HA HA HA HA!



NOT THAT IT'S ANY MORE COMFORTING.

NEED TO GET OUT...

...TO COLLECT FACTS FOR MY ARTICLE.

TRICK IS HOW TO DO THAT WITHOUT RIPPING THE DOOR OFF ITS HINGES. TOO BAD I CAN'T JUST WILL IT OPEN WITH MY...

...MIND?

CHLEK



TIME TO GO.

GET OUT BEFORE THEY BRAINWASH YOU INTO CARRYING OUT THEIR NEW WORLD ORDER!

ILLUMINATA! HOW--?

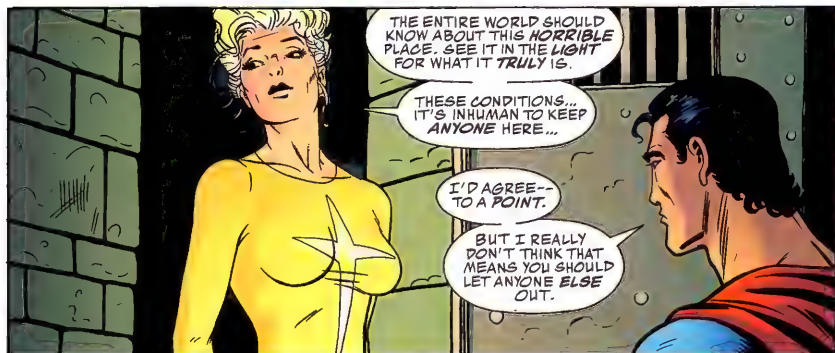


THE LIGHT. I GRABBED IT AWAY FROM THE GUARD PUTTING ME IN MY CELL.

OH, AND YOU USED IT TO BLIND HIM AND TAKE HIS PASSKEYS?



I BEAT HIM UNCONSCIOUS WITH IT.

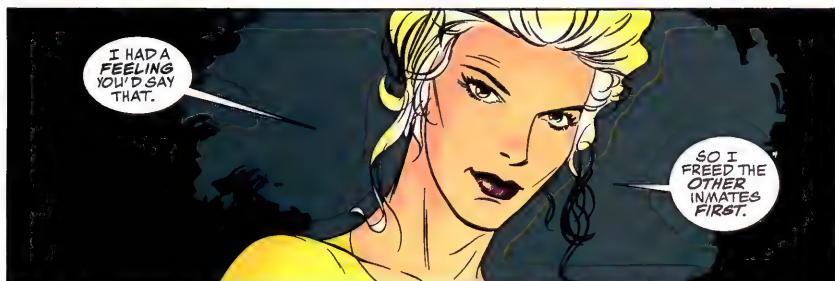


THE ENTIRE WORLD SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS HORRIBLE PLACE, SEE IT IN THE LIGHT FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS.

THESE CONDITIONS... IT'S INHUMAN TO KEEP ANYONE HERE...

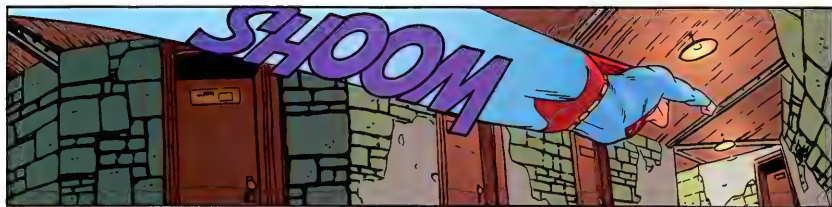
I'D AGREE-- TO A POINT.

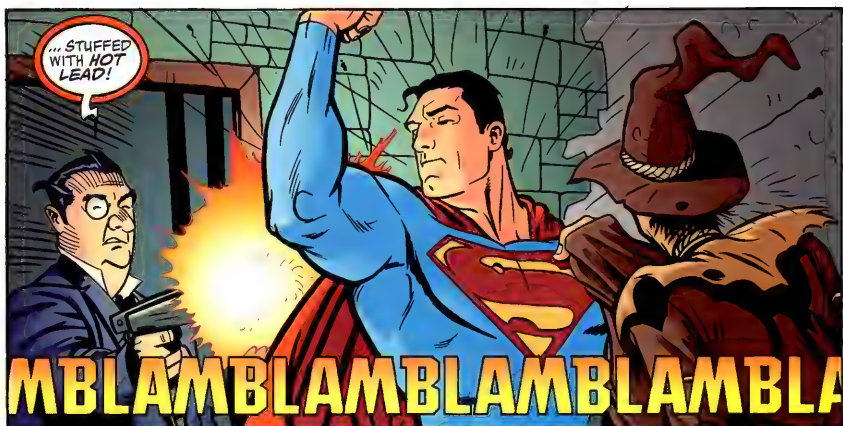
BUT I REALLY DON'T THINK THAT MEANS YOU SHOULD LET ANYONE ELSE OUT.

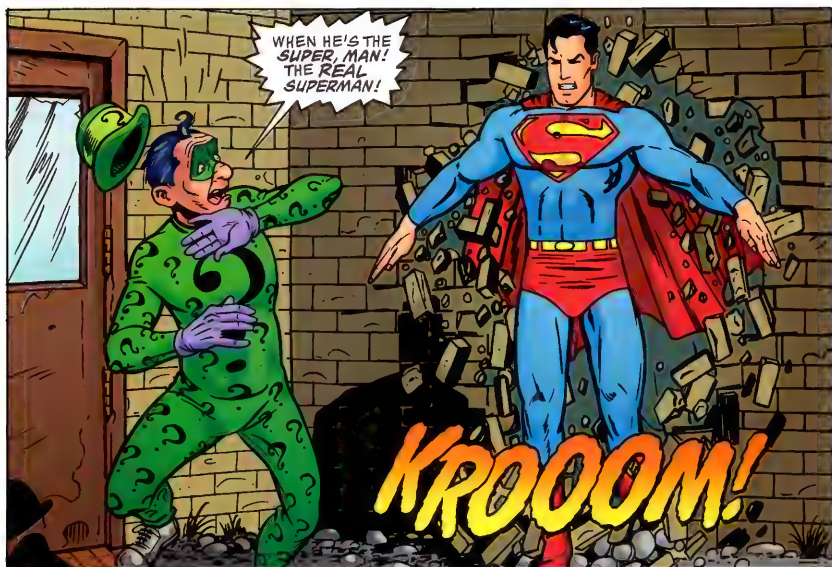


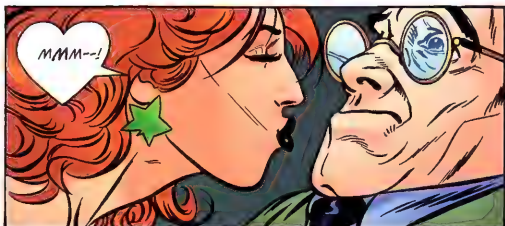
I HAD A FEELING YOU'D SAY THAT.

SO I FREED THE OTHER INMATES FIRST.

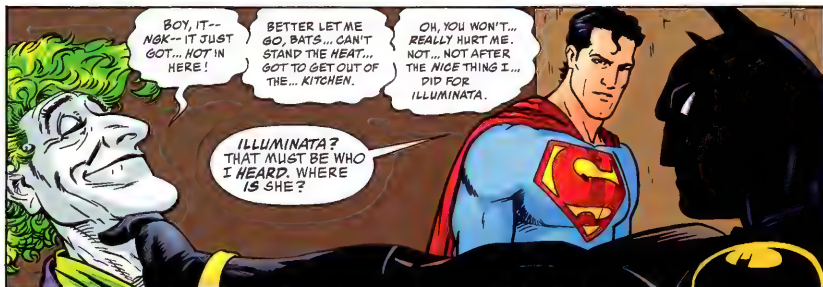
















--ANY CHANCE ILLUMINATA CAN BE HELPED... WHAT JOKER DID CAN BE FIXED?

IT'S POSSIBLE SHE'LL BE HEALED PHYSICALLY. BUT MENTALLY...



YOU CAN'T EXPERIENCE THAT AND NOT BE DEEPLY SCARRED, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. I KNOW...

I GUESS... I GUESS THERE'S SOME SMALL CONSOLATION THAT NO ONE WAS KILLED, NO ONE ESCAPED.

EXCEPT THEIR SUPERMAN.



I ASSUME THAT WAS CLARK KENT. YOU LOANED HIM YOUR COSTUME FOR SOME SORT OF INVESTIGATION, THEN GOT IT BACK WHEN YOU TOOK HIM TO SAFETY EARLIER.

THAT'S, um... THAT'S RIGHT. I-- WE THOUGHT IF CLARK STAGED HIS SUPERMAN ROUTINE MIDDAY IN GOTHAM, YOU'D HEAR ABOUT IT-- KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS. HELPING THE POLICE CAPTURE ILLUMINATA-- THAT WAS PURE LUCK. AT LEAST, I THOUGHT SO AT THE TIME.



NO-- IT WAS LUCKY I CAME BEFORE EVENTS GOT TOO OUT OF HAND.

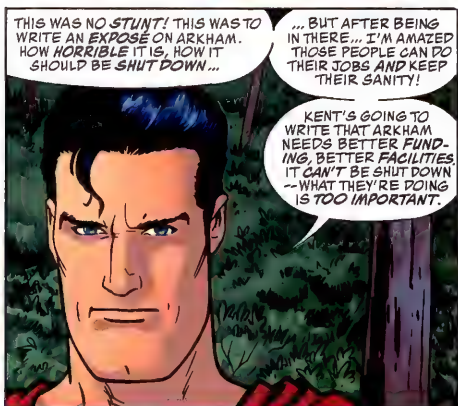
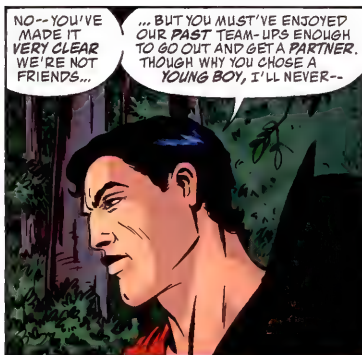
AND EVEN MORE LUCKY I WAS HERE TO BEGIN WITH, OR YOU MIGHT'VE ARRIVED TOO LATE, OR NOT AT--

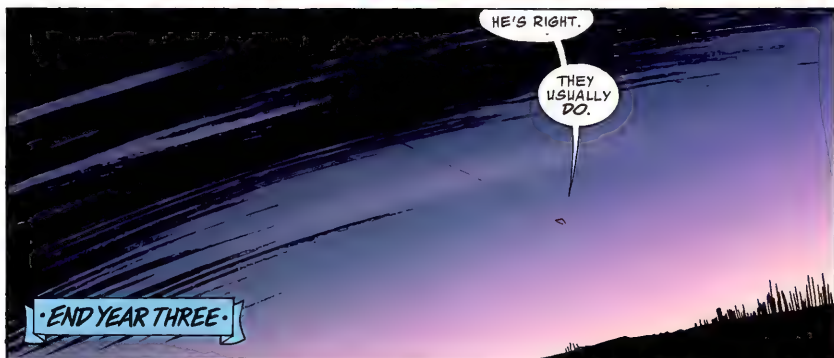
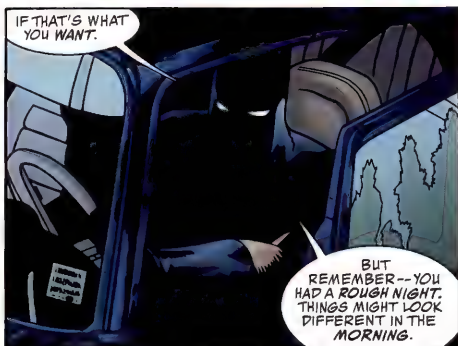
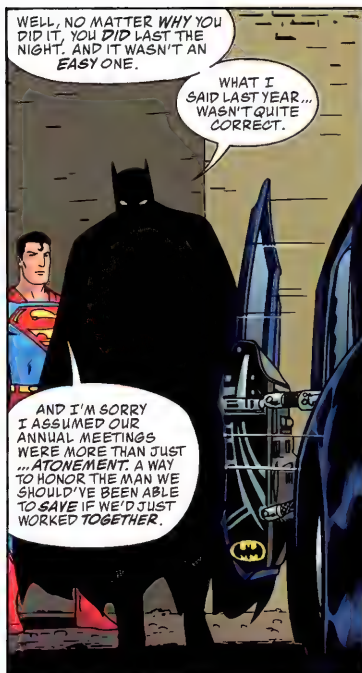
BATMAN? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

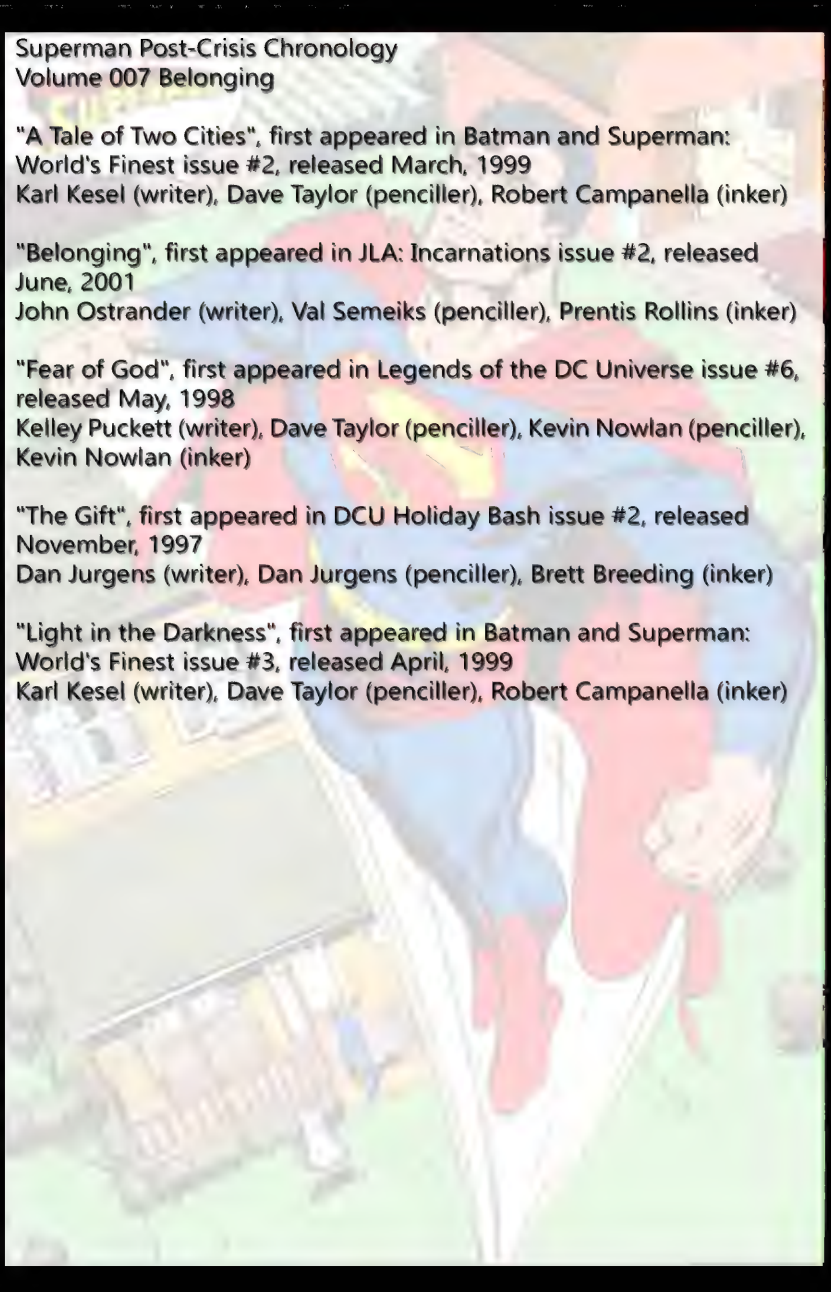


WHAT'S WRONG IS YOU ASSUMED I'D BE YOUR BACKUP-- JUST BECAUSE IT'S THE ANNIVERSARY OF HARRISON GREY'S DEATH!

YOU ACT LIKE WE'RE PARTNERS--OR FRIENDS!







Superman Post-Crisis Chronology Volume 007 Belonging

"A Tale of Two Cities", first appeared in *Batman and Superman: World's Finest* issue #2, released March, 1999
Karl Kesel (writer), Dave Taylor (penciller), Robert Campanella (inker)

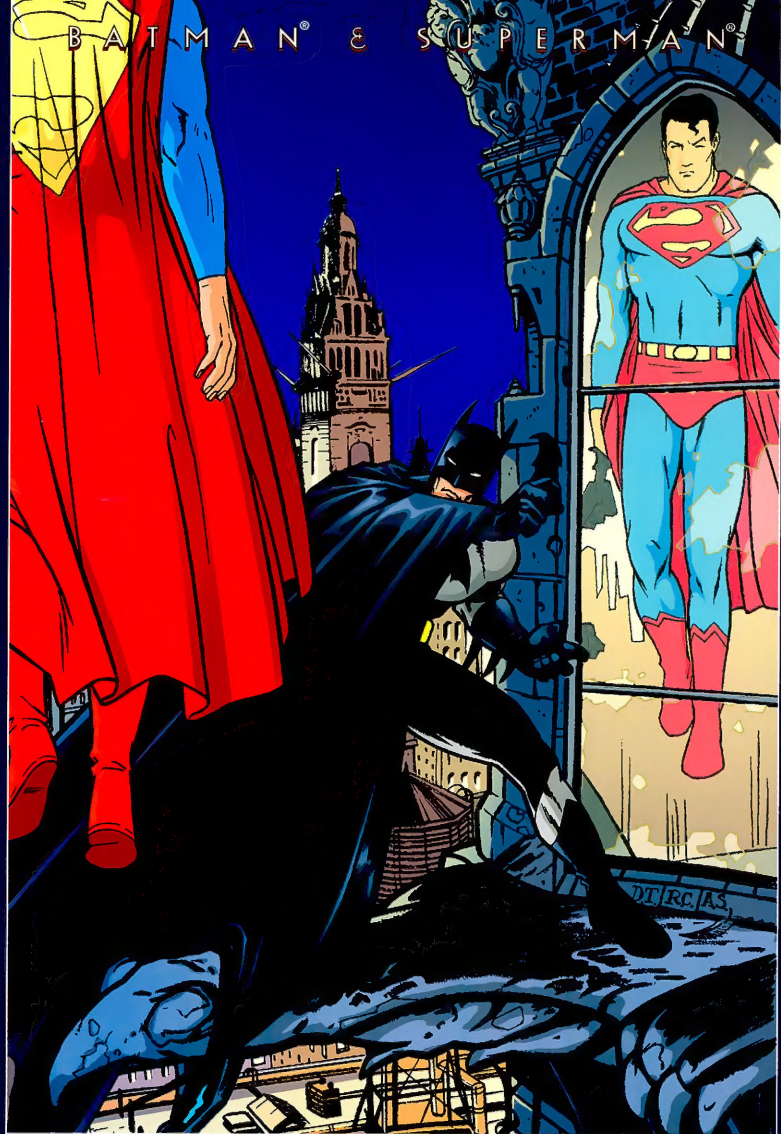
"Belonging", first appeared in *JLA: Incarnations* issue #2, released June, 2001
John Ostrander (writer), Val Semeiks (penciller), Prentis Rollins (inker)

"Fear of God", first appeared in *Legends of the DC Universe* issue #6, released May, 1998
Kelley Puckett (writer), Dave Taylor (penciller), Kevin Nowlan (penciller), Kevin Nowlan (inker)

"The Gift", first appeared in *DCU Holiday Bash* issue #2, released November, 1997
Dan Jurgens (writer), Dan Jurgens (penciller), Brett Breeding (inker)

"Light in the Darkness", first appeared in *Batman and Superman: World's Finest* issue #3, released April, 1999
Karl Kesel (writer), Dave Taylor (penciller), Robert Campanella (inker)

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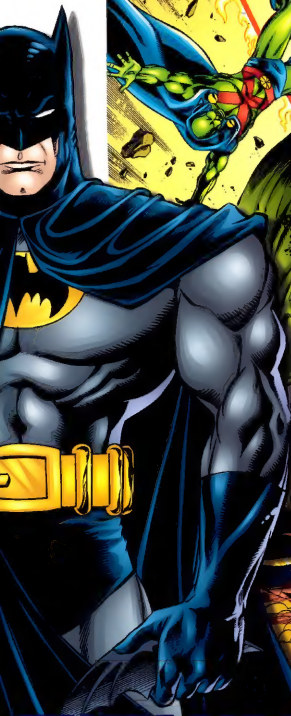
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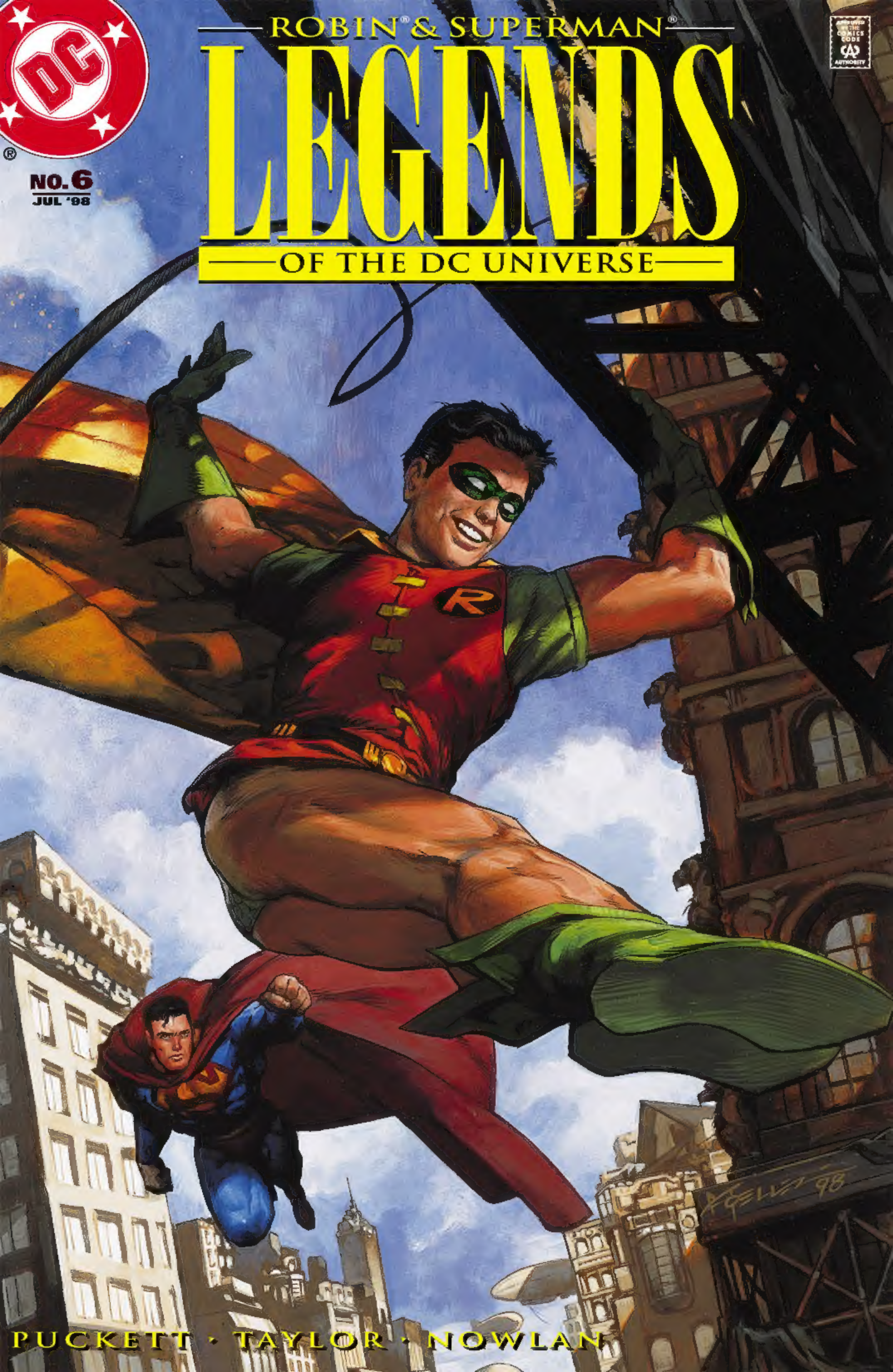
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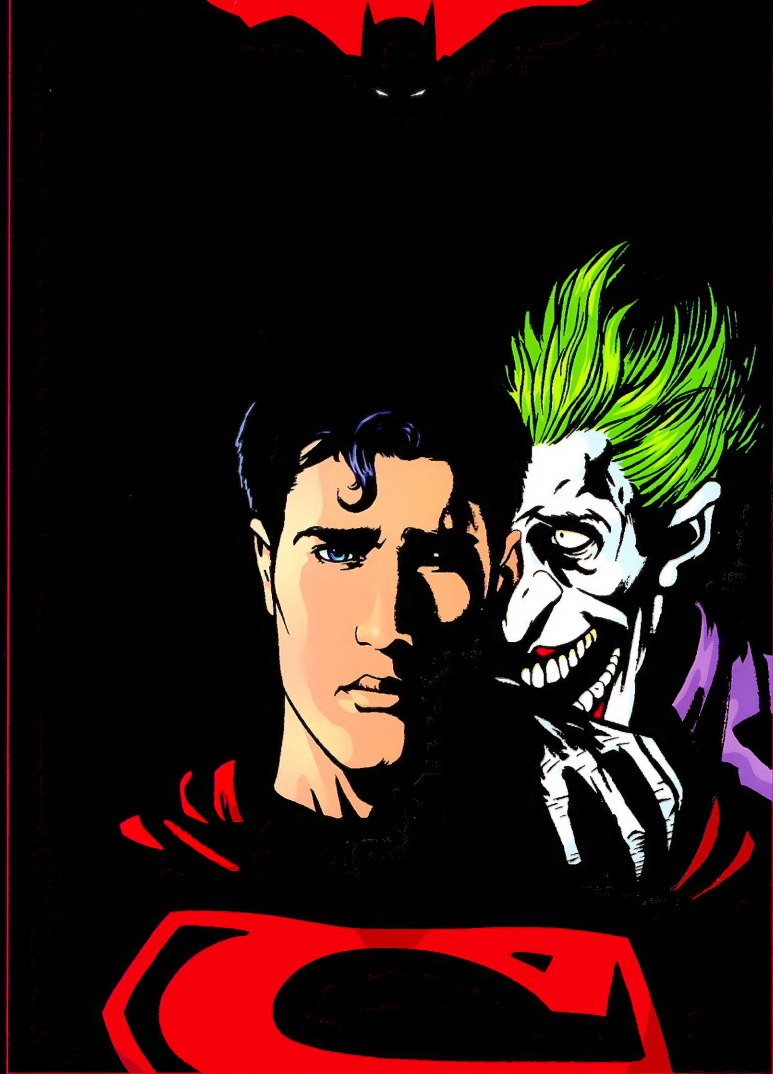
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